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THE

CONSTABLE DE BOURBON.

BY

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

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Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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BOOK IV.

(CONTINUED.)

THE SIEGE OF MARSEILLES.

XIV.

THE MINE.

WITHIN an hour after Pomperant's return to the camp, all the batteries on which the heavy cannon brought from Toulon had been mounted, opened fire upon that part of the ramparts where the breach had formerly been made. By nightfall a wide gap was made, and the cannonade then ceased.

At the same time the sappers, who had carried their works under the fosse after incredible toil, had reached the foundations of the walls. Before

midnight the chamber of the mine was completed, and the barrels of gunpowder deposited within it; and Lurcy, who had been entrusted with the superintendence of this dangerous operation, brought word to Bourbon that all was ready.

"Let the mine be sprung, then," replied Bourbon. "It will save some hours' work in the morning."

On returning to execute this order, Lurcy was accompanied by Pomperant. After tracking the windings of the long gallery, which was lighted by torches fixed at various points, and crowded by soldiers, they at length reached the chamber of the mine. Having seen that all the arrangements were carefully made, and that the casks of powder were so placed that they could be simultaneously exploded, they were about to retire, when the stroke of a pickaxe was heard on one side of the excavation. They listened intently, and the sound was again plainly distinguished.

"The enemy are making a counter-mine," said one of the sappers who was with them. "They are close upon us."

As he spoke, the strokes grew quicker and louder.

"They are working hard," remarked another sapper, with a grim smile. "But we shall soon check them."

While this took place, a third sapper, who had been engaged in laying a train of powder communicating with the barrels, got up and said to Lurcy and Pomperant,

"Retire, I pray you, messeigneurs. The train shall be fired as soon as you are out of danger."

On this intimation, Lurcy and Pomperant hastily retreated to the first epaulment, which was placed on the outer side of the moat, and in which they could take refuge during the explosion. All the sappers accompanied them, except one man, whose business it was to fire the train.

On reaching the mouth of the epaulment, Lurcy

called out to the man who was left behind—"Fire!".

On this the sapper knelt down and applied a lighted tow-match to the long train of powder. Both Lurcy and Pomperant watched the proceeding from the entrance of their place of refuge. In an instant the fiery line started on its terrible errand, and the sapper hurried off to the shelter of the epaulment.

Just at this moment, however, and while Pomperant was still watching the course of the burning train, he was startled by an unexpected occurrence. The whole of the wall of earth at the end of the chamber of the mine suddenly gave way, disclosing those who were engaged in making the counter-mine.

What was Pomperant's horror on discovering that the foremost of the party were no other than Marphise and Marcelline! Torches held by the Amazons in the rear fully revealed them to view.

There they stood, pickaxe in hand, preparing to leap over the mass of earth into the chamber.

Horrified at the sight, Pomperant would have rushed towards them had he not been forcibly held back by Lurcy. The two Amazons seemed paralysed by terror, and unable to retreat.

"Back, on your lives!" shouted Pomperant, in extremity of anguish.

A giddiness seized him, and, unable to offer any further resistance, he was dragged into the epaulment by Lurcy.

At this moment the explosion took place with a terrific sound, and a shock like that of an earthquake. From the noises that succeeded, it was evident that a large portion of the wall, under which the mine had been laid, was overthrown.

In another minute all these appalling sounds ceased, and a silence like that of death succeeded.

Lurcy and Pomperant, with the sappers, rushed out of the epaulment. But they could not pro-

ceed many paces. The torch held by one of the men flashed on a terrible scene, and revealed the work of destruction. The farther end of the passage beneath the moat was blocked up with huge stones and rubbish, and rents having been made in the sides, the water from the moat was pouring in, the place being already half flooded.

"I have lost her!" exclaimed Pomperant, in accents of despair. "They must all have perished in that terrible explosion. Why did you not let me extinguish the train?"

"Had you made the attempt, you would only have thrown away your own life," rejoined Lurcy. "But come away. You can do no good here."

"I will not go till I have ascertained what has become of her," cried Pomperant.

"Give yourself no further trouble, monseigneur," remarked the sapper who had fired the mine. "Not one of those brave young women can have escaped. They are all crushed beneath those stones."

"I would I had perished with her!" ejaculated Pomperant. And he reeled back, half fainting, against the side of the gallery.

Giving some hasty directions to the men, Lurcy took the arm of his friend, and led him away from the scene of destruction.

As they threaded the winding passages, their progress was impeded by parties of soldiers who were hastening from the place of arms to the farther end of the mine; but at last they issued forth into the open air.

As soon as Pomperant reached his tent, he threw himself on a couch in a state of complete exhaustion, while Lurcy hastened to inform Bourbon that the mine had been sprung.

XV.

HOW THE SIEGE OF MARSEILLES WAS RAISED.

NEXT morning, at an early hour, Del Vasto entered Pescara's tent, and found his redoubted relative alone and fully armed.

"What commands have you for me?" said the younger general. "Of course the assault will be made to-day. What with the long cannonade and the damage done by the mine, the breach must be wide enough."

"Ay, the breach is wide enough, undoubtedly," rejoined Pescara; "but the besieged are too well prepared. I shall not counsel the assault."

"You are not wont to be so cautious," said Del Vasto, surprised. "Doubtless a large number of men will be sacrificed. But what of that? The city will be taken."

"No, my good nephew," rejoined Pescara. "I find I must speak more plainly. Bourbon shall never take Marseilles."

"But you cannot prevent him. He will lead the assault, and we must follow."

"I forbid you," rejoined Pescara, authoritatively. "Listen to me, nephew. You know the full extent of Bourbon's ambitious designs, and that he hopes to carve a kingdom for himself out of France. You know that he aspires to the hand of the Emperor's sister Leonor, the widowed Queen of Portugal. Lannoy and I have resolved to thwart his plans. We do not mean to be supplanted by this proscribed prince. With this end, Lannoy has delayed the march of the Catalonian army, and I shall prevent the capture of Marseilles. If Bourbon

is compelled to raise the siege, he will forfeit the Emperor's favour, and will also lose credit with his other royal ally, King Henry VIII."

"Why not let the assault be made?" said Del Vasto. "Bourbon may fall, and then all the glory will be yours."

"But what if he should *not* fall?" rejoined Pescara. "What if the assault should prove resistless, and he should become master of Marseilles? Then his power would be confirmed, and it would be idle to oppose him. That must not be. I will snatch the prize from him at the very moment he deems he has secured it. But do not remain longer here. Get your men ready, and leave the rest to me."

Upon this, Del Vasto quitted the tent.

Meantime, orders having been issued that the assault would be made on that day, all the troops were got under arms.

Attended by Pomperant, Lurcy, and others of his suite. Bourbon rode along the lines, and ad-

dressed a few words to the men calculated to incite their courage. Much to his surprise, however, and vexation, these addresses were sullenly received, and in some cases responded to by murmurs.

"What can it mean?" remarked Bourbon to his attendants, as, having completed the inspection, he rode back towards his tent. "Officers and men seem unwilling to fight. Did I not know them better—had not their courage been proved in many a conflict—I should think they were alarmed at the task before them."

"They have heard too much of the reception they are likely to meet with," replied Lurcy. "They have seen how it has fared with hundreds of their comrades who have gone before them, and fear to share their fate. Besides, they have been discouraged."

"Discouraged!" exclaimed Bourbon, fiercely. "By whom?"

"By their leaders," rejoined Lurcy. "Pescara

has said openly that the city cannot be taken, and that the assault, when made, will fail. This opinion, delivered to the officers, has been repeated to the men, and has produced the effect which your highness has just observed. The whole army is discouraged."

"By Sainte Barbe! I will speedily rouse its spirit," cried Bourbon. "I have long distrusted Pescara. He has thwarted me secretly at every turn, but I have hitherto defeated his machinations, and I shall defeat them now. But for him, I should have taken the city when the first breach was made in the walls; and I have ever since reproached myself for yielding to his perfidious counsel. The garrison is now far better prepared for resistance than it was then."

"Pescara's opinion may proceed from jealousy, but I confess I share it," said Pomperant. "If your highness had carefully examined the defences of the city as I have done—if you had witnessed

the spirit displayed by the soldiers and by the people, and which presents a strong contrast to the sullenness and want of zeal of our own men, you would have come to the conclusion that Marseilles cannot be taken."

"Be the result what it may, the assault shall now be made," rejoined Bourbon. "By Sainte Barbe! I long for the moment of attack, when, amidst the roar of cannon and the rattle of arquebuses, we shall force our way through the breach, and hew down all who oppose us."

"You will then have a second ditch to cross, full of powder and combustibles," said Pomperant, "and another rampart, bristling with cannon, to scale."

"Were there a third ditch and a third rampart, they would not daunt me," cried Bourbon. "With this good blade, which has never yet failed me, I will cut a passage through the foe. Where I go, the men must follow."

"That is all I fear," said Lurcy. "I have no faith in these treacherous Spaniards."

"They cannot, dare not fall back now!" cried Bourbon.

"I hope not," replied Lurcy. But his looks belied his words.

On entering his tent with his suite, Bourbon found his confessor awaiting him, and the whole party knelt down reverently and performed their devotions. After partaking of a hasty meal, they donned their plumed casques, and buckling on their swords, issued forth, and mounted their steeds. By this time, the whole side of the hill, down which Bourbon now rode with his attendants, was covered with troops.

Glancing towards the city, Bourbon saw that ramparts, bastions, and towers were crowded with armed men. Extraordinary efforts had been made by the indefatigable Renzo da Ceri to repair the damage done by the cannonade and by the mine,

but the breach was too considerable to be filled up in the short time allowed for the task. The gap, however, was occupied by a living wall of pike-men.

"Your highness sees that the garrison are in good heart," remarked Pomperant. "They will assuredly make an obstinate defence."

"You overrate their courage," rejoined Bourbon. "Our attack will strike terror into them. You will keep near me, Pomperant."

"Doubt it not, monseigneur," replied the other. "I care not if I perish in the breach. She I loved lies buried there."

At this moment Bourbon came to a halt, and shortly afterwards the Marquis del Vasto, accompanied by the Counts de Hohenzollern and De Lodron, with the principal leaders of the army, joined him. All these martial personages were fully accoutred and well mounted, and made a gallant show. But there was something in their

looks and manner that convinced Bourbon and those with him that they were disinclined to the attack. However, he made no remark, but, saluting them with his wonted cordiality, said to Del Vasto,

"Where is the Marquis of Pescara? I wish to consult with him before ordering the assault."

"He will be here anon," replied the young general. "He has ridden down to examine the breach more nearly."

"Close inspection is not required to ascertain its width," cried Bourbon, impatiently. "I shall not wait for his return. To your posts, messeigneurs! —to your posts!"

But, to his surprise and vexation, none of them stirred.

"Do you not hear me?" he exclaimed. "To your posts, I say!"

"A few minutes' delay can matter little, highness," remarked the Count de Hohenzollern.

"We wish to hear Pescara's report. He may have some suggestions to offer."

"I can listen to no suggestions now," said Bourbon, imperiously. "My plans are fixed."

"Perhaps your highness has not been informed that the garrison has just been reinforced by fifteen hundred lansquenets and three hundred horse sent by the king," remarked De Lodron.

"I care not for the reinforcements," rejoined Bourbon. "Were the garrison doubled I would not delay the assault. What means this hesitation, messeigneurs? Away with you!"

"Highness," said De Hohenzollern, respectfully, "I pray you pardon our seeming disobedience, but it is necessary we should hear what the Marquis of Pescara has to say."

"Well, be it as you will," said Bourbon, with difficulty restraining his anger.

"Here he comes!" cried Del Vasto, as Pescara

galloped towards them, attended by a score of mail-clad knights.

"So, you are come at last, marquis," said Bourbon, as Pescara rode up. "You have kept us waiting long. What discovery have you made?"

"I have seen enough to satisfy me of the inutility of the attack," rejoined the other. "These citizens of Marseilles have spread a well-covered table for our reception. Those who desire to sup in Paradise may go there. I shall not."

"A truce to this ill-timed jesting, my lord," said Bourbon, sternly. "Be serious for a moment, if you can, and let us arrange the attack."

"I have had enough of this siege," rejoined Pescara, "and shall return at once to Italy, which is stripped of soldiers, and threatened by the King of France."

"If you withdraw now, my lord, it will be in express defiance of my commands," said Bourbon. "You will answer to the Emperor for your conduct."

"His Imperial Majesty knows me too well to suppose that I would turn back from danger," replied Pescara. "But I will not attempt impossibilities. I am not alone in my opinion. Put the question to the other generals. How say you, messeigneurs?" he added to them. "Ought the assault to be made?"

"We are all against it," said Del Vasto, speaking for the others, who bowed assent.

"You are all in league to thwart me," cried Bourbon, furiously. "But I will put you to shame. I will show you that the assault *can* be made successfully. Go, my lord, if you will," he added to Pescara. "Your soldiers will follow me."

"Your highness is mistaken," returned the other. "They will march with me to Italy."

Suppressing his rage, Bourbon turned to the German generals.

"I shall not, I am sure, lack your aid, messeigneurs," he said. "You and your brave lanzknechts will follow me?"

"Your highness must hold us excused," they replied. "Where the Marquis of Pescara declines to go, we are not foolhardy enough to venture."

"You find that I am right," remarked Pescara, with a mocking laugh. "There is nothing left for it but to raise the siege and depart."

"Depart!—never!" cried Bourbon. "Why, if the assault be not made, the meanest burgess of Marseilles will laugh us to scorn. Let the charge be sounded," he added to Pomperant. "We shall soon see who will follow me."

"None but your own attendants will follow," said Pescara.

At this moment an esquire approached, and stated that a messenger had just arrived from Aix, bringing most important intelligence. Bourbon immediately ordered the man into his presence.

"Highness," said the messenger, "I have speeded hither to inform you that the king arrived last evening at Aix with the army."

"The king arrived at Aix!" exclaimed Bourbon. "By Sainte Barbe! this is important news indeed, if true."

"It will be speedily confirmed, monseigneur," said the messenger. "The Marshal de Chabannes is marching with the vanguard of the army to the relief of Marseilles."

Bourbon made no remark, but signed to the messenger to retire.

"Your highness must now admit that I gave you good counsel in advising you to abandon the siege," remarked Pescara.

"Out upon your counsel!—it has been ruinous," cried Bourbon. "The city might have been taken ere Chabannes could come up. But I will forgive you all, if you will march with me at once to meet the king, and compel him to give us battle. A victory will retrieve the disgrace we shall incur by abandoning the siege, and satisfy both the Emperor and the King of England."

"I am against the plan," rejoined Pescara, coldly. "The king's army is far superior to our own in number, and we shall have the forces of the garrison in our rear. No, we must evacuate Provence."

"Not when a kingdom is to be won," cried Bourbon. "My lord! my lord! what change has come over you? Be yourself. François de Valois will now give us the opportunity we have so long sought. He cannot refuse a battle. We shall conquer. France lies before us, and invites us on!"

"Let those who will, go on," said Pescara, in a cold sarcastic tone. "I shall take the road to Italy. I will not risk a battle the result of which must be disastrous. Our army would be utterly destroyed. We must retreat while we can do so with safety."

"Never!" exclaimed Bourbon. "I will never retreat before François de Valois. The command of the army has been entrusted to me by the Emperor, and I call upon you to obey me."

"I refuse, monseigneur—peremptorily refuse," said Pescara.

For a few moments Bourbon was well-nigh choked with passion. When he could speak, he said, in hoarse accents,

"Since you are resolved upon this disgraceful course, I cannot prevent it. But let not the retreat be conducted with undue haste, and with disorder. Our munitions of war must not fall into the hands of the enemy. Bury the heavy cannon brought from Toulon. The lighter ordnance can be carried by mules. Throw all the great shot into the sea. Leave nothing behind that can be serviceable to the foe."

Then casting one look at the city, the brave defenders of which thronged its walls and towers, utterly ignorant of their deliverance, and momentarily expecting the assault, he rode back to his tent, where he remained during the rest of the day, a prey to indescribable mental anguish.

By nightfall, all preparations for the retreat had been completed, and, as soon as it became dark, the tents were struck, and the whole army got into order of march, and set off in the direction of Toulon.

By midnight, the heights around Marseilles were entirely abandoned, and the city, which for five weeks had been completely environed by enemies, was once more free.

Cautiously as the retreat of the Imperial army was conducted, it could not be accomplished without being discovered by the garrison. Indeed, the inaction of the besiegers throughout the day had caused their design to be suspected. A sortie, for the purpose of investigation, was made by Renzo da Ceri at the head of a troop of cavalry, and when he returned with the joyful intelligence that the heights were evacuated and the enemy gone, nothing could exceed the delight of the citizens. All those who had retired to rest were roused from

slumber by shouts and the ringing of bells. The populace were half frenzied with joy. Wherever Renzo da Ceri and Chabot de Brion appeared they were greeted with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of regard, and hailed as deliverers of the city. A torchlight procession, headed by the two commanders, was made through the principal streets, and when this was over, Renzo addressed a vast crowd in the Place de Linche. After extolling the courage and patriotic spirit displayed by the citizens, he said,

"The only circumstance that mars my satisfaction at this moment of triumph is the loss of our brave Amazons, Marphise and Marcelline."

"Let not that thought afflict you, monseigneur," said Pierre Cépède, who was standing near him. "They live. They have been rescued from the ruins of the wall beneath which they were supposed to be buried. Heaven has preserved them."

When this joyful intelligence was communicated

to the assemblage, a loud and long-continued shout rent the air.

While the citizens passed the night in rejoicing, Renzo da Ceri put himself at the head of a strong detachment of cavalry, and started in pursuit of the retreating enemy, for the purpose of harassing their march and cutting off stragglers.

He soon found they had taken the direction of Toulon, and had not proceeded far when he was joined by the Marshal de Chabannes with three hundred light horse. Together they hovered about the rear of the Imperial army until it had passed the Var, when they retired.

The Imperialists then pursued their course without further molestation, crossed the Maritime Alps, and entering Piedmont, proceeded to Alba, where they came to a halt.

Thus ended Bourbon's invasion of France. All the dreams of conquest he had indulged had vanished. The crown he had hoped to grasp had

escaped him. His plans had been thwarted by the jealousy of his generals, who had deserted him at the critical moment, when success seemed certain. Deep and bitter was the mortification he endured. But though disheartened, he did not despair. He felt sure that the theatre of war would be soon transferred to Italy, well knowing that François I. would never relinquish his pretensions to the Duchy of Milan.

"We shall meet on these plains, if not in France," he said to Pomperant, "and then I will requite him for the injuries he has done me. I will forgive Fortune all the scurvy tricks she has played me of late if she will grant me that day."

End of the Fourth Book.

BOOK V.

THE BATTLE OF PAVIA.

I.

HOW FRANÇOIS I. SET OUT FOR ITALY, AND HOW HE ENTERED MILAN.

"THERE is now no hindrance to my proposed campaign in Italy," remarked François I. to Bonnivet, when tidings of Bourbon's retreat were brought him. "Milan will speedily be regained, Genoa will follow, and then let the Emperor look well to Naples, if he would keep it. By Saint Louis! I will pluck that jewel from his crown, and place it on my own. I sent word to the Pope, that before the autumn was over I would cross the Alps at the head of thirty thousand men.

His holiness was incredulous, but he will find it was no rash assertion. I will be in Milan within a month."

"Your majesty overlooks one impediment," remarked Bonnivet. "Your gracious mother, the Duchess d'Angoulême, is averse to the expedition, and may prevent it. She is now at Lyons, and will start for Aix as soon as she learns that Bourbon has evacuated Provence. If you desire to execute your project, avoid an interview with her."

"The advice is good," said François. "My plan is fixed, but I do not wish to be importuned. I will despatch a messenger to the duchess with a letter, bidding her adieu, and at the same time appointing her Regent during my absence in Italy. Let immediate preparations be made for the march. Two days hence we will set out for Lombardy."

"Well resolved, sire," rejoined Bonnivet. "I am convinced that you have but to appear before Milan to compel its surrender."

"We shall see," said the king. "At all events, I do not think it will hold out as long as Marseilles."

"A propos of Marseilles, sire," said Bonnivet, "you must not forget that the principal citizens will be here to-morrow. No doubt they expect to receive your majesty's thanks for their gallant defence of the city."

"They shall have a worthy reception," returned François. "A grand fête shall be given in their honour. Give orders to that effect at once, and see that all is done to gratify these loyal citizens."

Next day, as had been anticipated, a numerous company arrived from Marseilles. The cavalcade was headed by the viguier, the magistrates, and many of the principal citizens, and was, moreover, accompanied by the band of Amazons. Peals of ordnance were fired, bells rung and trumpets brayed, as the procession entered Aix. The houses were hung with banners, and the streets

filled with people eager to give them welcome. The Amazons were everywhere greeted with acclamations.

François received the party in the great hall of the palace. He was surrounded by a brilliant assemblage, comprising the chief personages of his army, and including, among others, the young King Henri of Navarre, the Duc d'Alençon, the Grand Master of France, the Comte de Saint-Paul, the Marshal de Montmorency, the Marshal de Foix, and the Seneschal d'Armagnac. Near to the king, on the left, stood the lovely Diane de Poitiers, and close behind them was a train of demoiselles and pages.

The viguier and the magistrates were presented to the king by Bonnivet, who, with a band of young nobles, had met them at the gates, and conducted them to the palace. François gave them a most cordial reception, thanking them in the warmest terms for the courage and zeal they had

displayed. But his chief commendations were bestowed upon the Amazons; and he presented two gems to Marphise and Marcelline, bidding them wear them as tokens of his approval.

"I trust that my faithful city of Marseilles will never be placed in the like strait again, so that it may need the defence of its dames," he said; "but should it be so, I doubt not your noble example will be followed."

"We have shown our fellow-citizens what women can do in the hour of need, sire," said Marphise; "but now that our services are no longer required, we shall lay aside the arms we have borne, and resume our customary avocations. This is the last occasion on which we shall appear in these accoutrements—unless your majesty should think fit to call upon us again. In that case, we shall be ready to resume them."

"Foi de gentilhomme!" exclaimed François, smiling. "I am half inclined to take you with me

to Italy, where you would earn as much distinction as you have done at Marseilles. How say you, fair damsels? Will you go with us? Such a corps would prove irresistible."

"Nay, sire," interposed Diane. "They have done enough. Marseilles cannot spare its heroines."

"You are right," said François. "I was but jesting. Women are not like our ruder sex. They do not love war for its own sake. Our camp would be no place for them."

"The Amazons of old fought as well as men, sire—better, if all reports be true," said Marphise, boldly. "We have something of their spirit."

"You ought to be soldiers' wives," said François, smiling, "and on my return from Italy—if you be not meanwhile wedded—I must find you husbands among my bravest captains. It greatly rejoices me to see you here to-day, for I had heard —much to my grief—that you perished during the explosion of a mine."

"We narrowly escaped being crushed to death, sire," replied Marcelline. "But after lying beneath the ruins for some hours, we were fortunately extricated."

"Heaven designed you for a better fate," said the king. "I have but imperfectly discharged my obligations to you. Whenever you have a favour to solicit, hesitate not to come to me. Foi de gentilhomme! the request shall be granted."

"At some future time I may claim fulfilment of your royal promise, sire," returned Marcelline.

The whole party then retired, charmed with their gracious reception. A sumptuous repast awaited them in the banqueting-chamber, and the rest of the day was spent in festivity and rejoicing.

"Are you prepared to brave the difficulties of the march and accompany me to Italy?" said François to Diane, as the Amazons withdrew.

"No, sire," she replied; "and I would fain dissuade you from the expedition. You have now

an opportunity of making an advantageous peace with the Emperor. Why not profit by it?"

"Honour forbids me," he rejoined. "My own inclinations prompt me to remain here. But I must requite the affront offered me by Bourbon. I must win back the duchy I have lost."

"And for this you will quit France—you will quit me?" she added, in a lower tone.

"I must," he replied. "I have been attacked, and I owe it to myself to chastise the insolent aggressor."

At this moment a letter was handed to him by Bonnivet.

"From the Duchess d'Angoulême, sire," he said, in a significant tone, as he delivered it.

"What says your royal mother, sire?" demanded Diane, who had watched his countenance as he perused the letter. "I will wager she is of my mind, and urges you to abandon the expedition."

"You are right, ma mie," replied the king. "She tells me she is coming in all haste to Aix, having a secret of great importance to reveal to me, and she entreats me to delay my departure till her arrival."

"And you will comply with the request, sire?" said Diane. "No doubt she has some state secret to communicate. You will wait?"

"I shall rather hasten my departure," rejoined the king. "I can guess the nature of her secret. It is a pretext to detain me—but I will not yield. Make ready, messeigneurs," he added to the leaders near him. "We shall set forth to Italy to-morrow."

"Why do you not dissuade his majesty from this expedition, messeigneurs?" said Diane to Saint-Paul and Montmorency. "I know you disapprove of it."

"If your majesty would listen to me," said Saint-Paul, "I would urge you to delay the cam-

paign till the spring. The season is too far advanced. You will have to pass the winter in your tent, in the midst of snow and water."

"On the contrary, I shall pass the winter in the ducal palace at Milan, which is as large and pleasant as the Château de Blois," replied François. "What think you of the expedition, Montmorency?" he added to the marshal.

"Since you ask me, sire, I must say frankly that I am opposed to it," he replied. "I look upon the plains of Lombardy with dread. They are rife with all ailments. Agues and fever abound there, and pestilence reigns in the cities. I regard Lombardy as one vast sepulchre in which we are all to be engulfed."

"You had the plague at Abbiate-Grasso, and have not forgotten the attack," remarked the king.

"Ay, and the plague is now raging at Milan," said Montmorency. "Beware of it, sire. 'Tis a more deadly enemy than Bourbon."

"Oh, do not venture into that infected city, sire," implored Diane. "I have a presentiment that this expedition will be disastrous."

"Bah! I go to win another Marignan," rejoined François.

"We have more than a month of fine weather before us now," remarked Bonnivet to Diane. "Long before winter has set in his majesty will be master of Milan."

"But the plague!—the plague!" cried Diane. "How is he to avoid that? Be advised by me, sire, and stay in France, where you incur no risk."

"I laugh at all danger," rejoined the king. "My sole regret is that I must perforce leave you behind. To those who cannot brave the rigours of winter, or who are afraid of the pestilence," he added, glancing at Montmorency and Saint-Paul, "the roads of France will be open."

"Nay, sire, as long as you remain in Italy I shall stay—even if I find a tomb there," said Montmorency.

"It is well," rejoined François. "To-morrow we start on the expedition."

Seeing that her royal lover was inflexible, Diane made no further effort to turn him from his purpose. Her only hope was that the Duchess d'Angoulême might arrive before his departure. But in this she was disappointed. François had taken his measures too well. A messenger met the duchess on the way, and telling her the king was on the eve of departure, she turned back.

It was a glorious day on which François, after taking a tender farewell of Diane, set forth with his host from Aix—and it was a gallant sight to see the king, arrayed in his splendid armour, and mounted on his war-horse, issue from the gates accompanied by the flower of the French chivalry. Proceeding by forced marches along the valley of the Durance to Briançon, he crossed the Alps without difficulty by the Pass of Susa.

Enthusiastic was his delight at finding himself

once more in Italy at the head of an army which he deemed irresistible. Without encountering any obstruction he pressed on to Vercelli, where he ascertained the movements of the enemy.

The Imperial army, it appeared, had been greatly reduced by the forced march from Marseilles, and had also sustained heavy losses of baggage and artillery. Two thousand men had been thrown into Alexandria. Lodi, Pizzighettone, and Como were also strongly garrisoned, but by far the most formidable preparations had been made at Pavia, the defence of which had been committed, as during Bonnivet's campaign in the previous year, to Antonio de Leyva. The garrison of Pavia was now augmented by five thousand German lanzknechts under De Hohenzollern, five hundred Spanish soldiers, and three hundred lances.

Bourbon and Pescara, accompanied by Lannoy, had marched with the rest of the army to Milan, and thither François determined to follow them.

Two days after quitting Vercelli the king appeared before the city. His approach could not, of course, be concealed from the Imperialists, and a long counsel was held by Bourbon and the other chiefs as to the possibility or prudence of holding the place against him. It was decided that, considering the enfeebled condition of the troops and the infected state of the city, there was no alternative but to abandon it. Defence under such circumstances was, indeed, impossible, and had the Imperial generals attempted to sustain a siege, the whole army would probably have been destroyed by the pestilence.

Accompanied by Sforza, Pescara, and the others, Bourbon therefore quitted the city, and proceeded to Lodi. Just as the last of the Imperialists marched out of Milan by the Porta Romana, a detachment of the French army, under La Trémouille, entered the city by the Porta Vercellina.

The satisfaction which François would have felt

at this easy conquest was marred by the dismal aspect of the plague-stricken city. Ghastly evidences of the presence of the Destroyer met his eye at every turn. The deserted streets, the closed houses, the mournful air of the populace—all conspired to cast a gloom over him.

Just then the pestilence was at its height. On the very day on which he entered Milan with his host, several hundreds of persons had died, and as many more were sick. The hospitals and lazar-houses were filled to overflowing, and the pits surcharged with dead. No remedies could be found to arrest the progress of the scourge. Almost all who were seized by it perished, and the city was more than half depopulated.

No wonder that François blamed himself for his rashness in exposing his army to so much peril. But he resolved that his stay in Milan should be brief—no longer than was absolutely necessary to resume his authority—and that all

possible precautions should be taken against contagion. With this view he secluded himself within the ducal palace, and ordered the army to encamp without the walls.

II.

BONNIVET'S LAST INTERVIEW WITH THE COMTESSA DI CHIERI.

THERE was a fair dame in Milan, to behold whom Bonnivet had urged the king, at all risks, to march on to the city. This was the Comtessa di Chieri. Had it been possible, he would have flown to her immediately on his arrival. But he was detained throughout the day at the ducal palace, partly in immediate attendance upon the king, and partly in the discharge of other duties that devolved upon him, for he was obliged to confer with the civic officials and others whom

François would not admit to his presence. But he had despatched a messenger to the countess, with a letter informing her that he would visit her in the evening, and had received an answer saying she expected him.

When night came, and he was free, he flew to her palace in the Corso Romano, and was instantly admitted. He found her in the superb saloon where he had last seen her, surrounded with objects of luxury, and looking beautiful as ever. But her appearance was somewhat changed. There was a flush in her cheeks, and a preternatural brilliancy in her dark eyes. A rapturous meeting took place between them, and the pain of their long separation seemed forgotten in the bliss of the moment.

"I did not think I should ever behold you again," she murmured.

"You doubted my love for you, or you could never have entertained that notion," he replied,

passionately. "Hear what I have done to obtain this interview. To pass an hour with you, Beata, I have prevailed upon the king to undertake a new campaign in Italy. To throw myself at your feet, I have induced him to march on Milan."

"You should not have come now," she rejoined. "Had I been able to do so, I would have warned you to avoid this infected city."

"I have no fear of the pestilence," said Bonnivet. "And I would brave any danger to be near you. But why have you exposed yourself to so much risk? Why have you remained here?"

"I could not leave," she rejoined. "And I have an excellent physician, Doctor Nardi, who watches over me. Ah! here he is," she added, as a grave-looking personage, attired in a black silk doublet and hose, and wearing a black silk skull-cap, entered the saloon.

After respectfully saluting Bonnivet, Doctor Nardi seated himself beside the countess, and kept

his eyes upon her for some moments. Bonnivet, who watched him closely, thought he detected anxiety in his looks.

"You have not been quite well to-day, I think, countess?" remarked Doctor Nardi.

"I had a severe headache this morning," she replied. "But it has passed."

"Any feverish symptoms?" inquired the doctor.

"Yes," she replied. "About an hour ago, I felt stifled with heat, and then had a shivering fit. But there is nothing to be alarmed at?" she added, nervously.

"Nothing—nothing," he replied. "But you must retire to rest immediately. The fever has not quite left you, and may return."

"But why should I retire to rest, dear doctor?" appealed the countess. "I do not feel ill. Ah! I see you are alarmed about me," she continued, gazing eagerly at him. "Tell me what is the matter?"

"Do not agitate yourself, signora," he returned. "You will soon be better—but you must attend to my directions. I will send you a febrifuge presently, and will see you in the morning. Good night, countess."

He then bowed and departed, and Bonnivet, feeling very uneasy, followed him out of the room.

"I trust the countess is not seriously ill, doctor?" inquired Bonnivet.

"A passing indisposition," replied Nardi, evasively. "But you must not stay, monseigneur. Take leave of the countess. At this awful season there is no security that they who part at night may meet again on the morrow."

The last words were uttered with a significance that increased Bonnivet's uneasiness.

"Do not conceal the truth from me, doctor," he said. "The certainty, however dreadful, would be more tolerable than suspense."

"What purpose will it answer to tell you what I think?" rejoined Nardi. "Be advised by me, and leave the palace without delay. Every moment you remain here increases the risk."

"Ha!" ejaculated Bonnivet, horror-stricken. "I now understand. But I will not leave her."

"As you please, monseigneur," said Nardi. "I have warned you."

"Stay, I implore of you," cried Bonnivet, detaining him. "Is there any means of saving her?"

"Alas! none," replied Nardi. "She is beyond the power of medicine. I have seen too many fatal cases lately to be mistaken. She has all the worst symptoms about her. Before to-morrow morning she will be a corpse."

"Oh! say not so, doctor!" cried Bonnivet, distractedly.

"You are never content," rejoined Nardi, petulantly. "You try to extract the truth from me,

and when I yield to your importunities, you are dissatisfied. You now know the worst. Act as you think proper; but if you would not yourself fall a victim to the pestilence, you will leave the palace as expeditiously as possible. I will send a nurse to attend upon the countess, and a priest to minister to her soul's welfare."

"I cannot, will not, leave her," rejoined Bonnivet, rushing back to the saloon.

"Then share her fate," muttered Nardi, shrugging his shoulders as he departed.

Even in this brief interval a marked change had taken place in the countess's looks. The flush in her cheeks had given way to deathly pallor, but the fire in her large black eyes burnt yet more fiercely. As Bonnivet returned, she started up from the couch on which she had sunk, and caught hold of his arm.

"What has he told you?" she demanded, gazing at him as if to search into his soul. "I know he

thinks me ill—very ill—but he does not suspect—ha!" And she paused.

"No, no; calm yourself," rejoined Bonnivet, endeavouring to reassure her. "There is no danger. But he charged me to reiterate his order that you should retire to rest immediately."

"But I do not choose to obey him," she rejoined. "I do not want to part with you. I feel better—much better. Come and sit beside me," she added, returning to the couch, "and let us renew the discourse which the doctor interrupted. I will leave Milan to-morrow. If you march to Lodi or Pavia, I may accompany you—may I not?"

Bonnivet made no reply.

"You do not seem pleased by the proposition," she continued. "Do you not wish to have me near you?"

"Oh! this is more than I can bear!" exclaimed Bonnivet, unable to repress his emotion.

The countess gazed at him bewildered.

"Your looks affright me," she said. "I am sure

Doctor Nardi has told you more about me than you are willing to repeat. But I will shake off my misgivings. I will be gay. Pledge me in a cup of wine," she continued, filling a silver goblet. "May our love last for ever!"

And raising the goblet to her lips she handed it to him.

But Bonnivet set down the cup untasted.

"What! you refuse my pledge?" she cried.

"I can act this part no longer," mentally ejaculated Bonnivet. "Summon all your fortitude, Beata," he added to her. "I have a terrible communication to make to you."

"I partly guess it," she rejoined, with a ghastly look. "But speak! What have you to tell me?"

"I cannot bring my tongue to utter what I have to say," he returned. "Any other lips than mine should pronounce the fatal words."

At this moment the door opened, and a priest entered, accompanied by a Sister of Charity. On their entrance the countess arose with difficulty.

"Daughter," said the priest, "we have been sent to you by your physician, Doctor Nardi. This good sister will watch over you, while I will minister to you the last offices of our religion, and prepare you for the awful change which you must speedily undergo."

"Am I dreaming?" she cried, gazing in terror at them. "Doctor Nardi told me nothing of all this."

"No, daughter; he left it to me to tell you that you are stricken by the pestilence."

The unfortunate countess heard no more, but uttering a piercing cry, fell senseless on the couch. The Sister of Charity flew to her assistance.

"Go, monseigneur," said the priest to Bonnivet. "The few short hours she has left must be devoted to Heaven. Go, I pray you!"

Thus adjured, Bonnivet could not resist. Casting a glance of anguish at the inanimate countess, he quitted the room, and left the palace.

III.

HOW FRANÇOIS I. BESIEGED PAVIA.

BONNIVET was so overcome by the shock caused by the sad fate of the Comtessa di Chieri, that for two days he was unable to leave his chamber. On the third day, being informed that a council of war was to be held by the king, he roused himself to attend it.

All the leaders of the army were present at the council, and the question proposed for their consideration by the king was, whether the enemy should be first attacked at Lodi or Pavia.

"My own inclinations prompt me to proceed to Pavia," said François. "As the second city of the duchy, if it falls, all the rest must surrender. The Imperialists will soon be driven out of Lombardy, and then we can march on to Naples. But I am not wedded to this plan, and desire to have your opinions. Speak freely."

"My advice to your majesty," said Montmorency, "is to march first on Lodi, whither Pescara and Bourbon have retired with the remnants of their army. The city is badly fortified, and without provisions, and will be easily taken."

"You are misinformed as to the condition of Lodi," said Bonnivet. "Be assured that Bourbon and Pescara would not have retired there unless they had felt certain they could hold it. The fortress was first strengthened by Francesco Sforza, and subsequently rendered impregnable by Federigo da Bozzolo, who held it, as you know, to the last. The Imperial army is still numerous, and

will make an obstinate and determined resistance. To attack a fortress so defended is to run the risk of failure. Pavia, on the contrary, can be speedily reduced either by force or stratagem. Antonio de Leyva has but little authority over the garrison, which consists almost exclusively of German lanzknechts, who have been badly paid, and are known to be discontented."

"That may be true," remarked Montmorency, "but De Leyva is a very skilful commander, full of energy and resources, and will make a long and vigorous defence. When the Imperial army quitted Milan on our approach it was in a state of great disorder. The men had suffered greatly by their march, and were in many cases without arms, and almost without accoutrements. Again, the plague has thinned their ranks, and those who are left are disheartened. They can soon be starved out at Lodi, where provisions are scanty. Lodi ours—Bourbon, Pescara, Lannoy, and Sforza cap-

tives—Pavia and all the other cities and fortresses of the duchy must inevitably surrender. From these considerations, I counsel your majesty to march on the Adda and not to encamp on the Ticino."

All the other leaders, except Saint-Marsault, concurred with Montmorency; but Bonnivet would not give up his point.

"The king's honour is concerned in the matter," he said. "A war waged by his majesty in person ought not to be conducted according to the ordinary rules of military tactics."

"No successful war can be conducted otherwise," remarked Montmorency, contemptuously. "Such advice would not have been tendered by Bayard, were he alive."

"It comports not with the king's dignity to attack a small fortress while an important city holds out," retorted Bonnivet. "Pavia captured, his majesty will be master of the Milanese, and can then proceed to the invasion of Naples."

"Foi de gentilhomme! you are right," exclaimed the king. "Honour calls us to Pavia and not to Lodi, and we will obey the summons. Seigneur de la Trémouille," he added to that general, "I entrust to you the defence of this city of Milan. I will leave with you eight thousand fantassins and three hundred lances—a force amply sufficient in the event of an attack on the part of the Imperialists. As to you, messeigneurs," he continued to the others, "you will make ready. To-morrow we set out for Pavia."

Towards evening, on the following day, François appeared before Pavia with the whole of his army, excepting that portion of it which had been left with La Trémouille for the defence of Milan.

The king was in excellent spirits, confident in his army, which was in splendid condition, and well supplied with cavalry and artillery, and he had entire faith in Bonnivet's representations that Pavia would be an easy conquest, and its possession ensure him the mastery of the duchy.

It was therefore in a blithe mood that he approached the ancient capital of the Longobardi kingdom, and gazed at its numerous towers and spires, its proud Duomo and stern castello, rising from out its walls, and now empurpled by the rays of the setting sun.

"Is not yon city better worth fighting for than Lodi, sire?" remarked Bonnivet, who was riding near him, and saw what was passing in his breast.

"Ay, marry is it," rejoined the king. "I should almost be sorry if it were to surrender. A week's siege will be pleasant pastime."

"I do not think your majesty will be disappointed," replied Bonnivet. "De Leyva is obstinate, and will not yield without giving us some trouble. But the city *must* fall when you choose to take it, and you can therefore proceed as leisurely as you will. As I have already explained to your majesty, the garrison, which consists almost entirely of German lanz-knechts, under the command of the

Comte de Hohenzollern, is discontented and even mutinous, and, if need be, can be easily corrupted."

"I would rather conquer with steel than gold," rejoined François, laughing. "But let us consider where I shall establish my quarters. I must have access to yon charming park of Montibello, which, with its woods and glades, reminds me of the forest of Fontainebleau."

And, as he spoke, he pointed to a vast park, several miles in extent, and very thickly wooded, lying to the north of the city. In the midst of this park, which, extensive as it was, was completely surrounded by strong and lofty walls, stood a large palace, which had been built as a hunting-seat by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan.

The palace, though merely designed to enable its princely owner to pursue the pleasures of the chase, was strongly fortified, moated, and approached by a drawbridge. As may well be imagined, the close vicinity of this vast and noble park to the city was

a great embellishment to its appearance. But, in truth, Pavia was extremely beautiful and picturesque, full of splendid edifices, and boasting numerous churches, convents, and stately mansions.

At the same time, the extraordinary number of strong and lofty towers by which it was guarded, together with its huge and frowning citadel, gave it a very formidable appearance, which was further increased by its walls and bastions, now abundantly garnished with ordnance. But it was not merely to its walls and towers that Pavia owed its strength. On the side on which it was weakest it was protected by a deep and rapid river, which formed an impassable moat.

About a league above Pavia the Ticino divides itself into two arms, one of which bathes the walls in the manner just described, while the lesser arm, after describing a wide curve, rejoins the main stream below the city, forming an island near its point of junction, on which the suburb of Sant

Antonio was built. A stone bridge, erected by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, covered by a gallery, and defended by a strong tower, connected this suburb with the city.

Between the banks of the lesser arm of the Ticino and the walls, and contiguous to the park of Mirabello, stood the stately abbey of San Lanfranco and the church of San Salvator, and it was towards these structures that Bonnivet now directed the king's attention.

"Your majesty observes yonder abbey and church," he said, pointing them out. "There you can conveniently establish your quarters during the siege. Openings can easily be made in the walls so as to give you access to the park of Mirabello, and, if you are so minded, you can occupy the château of Gian Galeazzo Visconti."

"I like the situation of the abbey best, and will take up my quarters near it," said the king. "I will have you and the Grand Master with

me, and the main part of the army shall encamp there. The Marshal de la Palisse shall post himself on yon hills on the east of the city," pointing in that direction. "The Duke d'Alençon shall occupy the park of Mirabello, and take possession of the château of Gian Galeazzo."

"Possession of the little island on which stands the suburb of Sant Antonio is important," said Bonnivet. "If your majesty will allow me, I will take it."

"No, that shall be Montmorency's task," rejoined François. "He is angry that we have come hither in preference to Lodi. I must find him employment."

These arrangements were carried out. Next morning François fixed his quarters near the abbey of San Lanfranco, while his generals posted themselves as he had directed.

On the same day, the Marshal de Montmorency, with a large force, consisting of more than five

thousand men, crossed the lesser arm of the Ticino by a bridge of boats, and took possession of the island. Then turning to the tower, at the head of the bridge communicating with the city, he summoned the little garrison to surrender, and meeting with a determined refusal from the officer in command, immediately attacked the tower and took it. Most of the garrison had fallen during the assault, but the survivors—amongst whom was the captain, a valiant man-at-arms—were brought before the marshal.

"How dared you resist the king's army in a paltry shed like that?" he demanded.

"It was our duty to guard the bridge, monseigneur," replied the captain, boldly.

"You are false traitors, and shall serve as an example to your fellows, who will learn the fate they may expect if they hold out," rejoined Montmorency, furiously. "Away with them!" he added to the guard. "Hang them at once from

the summit of the tower, in face of the city, so that the whole garrison may behold them."

The ruthless mandate was immediately carried into effect, and the brave soldiers were ignominiously put to death.

Unable to stay the execution, which he witnessed from the walls of the city, De Leyva vowed to make terrible reprisals on the first prisoners he should take, and he kept his word. By partially destroying the bridge, he prevented Montmorency from following up his success in that direction.

Pavia being now invested at all points, François determined to commence the assault without delay, and his batteries being placed and mounted with powerful artillery, he opened fire simultaneously on the eastern and western sides of the city, continuing the cannonade for three days, when a sufficient breach in either portion of the walls was effected.

Next day, the assault was made on both points at the same time, and at each encountered a vigorous resistance.

One party of the besiegers was led on by Bonnivet, who gallantly mounted the breach, but on gaining its summit he was checked by the pikes of the Spanish soldiers, and discovered, at the same time, that within the walls there was a deep trench, of the existence of which he had been ignorant, while from its parapets a company of arquebusiers, commanded by De Leyva, poured a murderous fire upon him. His armour alone saved him—all those near him being struck down. As it was impossible to force the breach under such circumstances, he was compelled to retire.

Nor did better success attend the Marshal de la Palisse, by whom the assault was made on the other side of the city. He was repulsed with heavy loss by the Comte de Hohenzollern.

It was then found that such preparations had

been made by De Leyva that it was impossible to take the place by assault, and that recourse must be had to the tedious operations of sap and mine. However, the king reconciled himself without difficulty to the delay, and his troops, so far from being dissatisfied, were well pleased. There was plenty of good cheer in the camp, abundance of provisions were brought from the country round, and a market was held in the park of Mirabello, where these were sold.

Thus the besiegers led a joyous life, interrupted only by an occasional skirmish. As to François, he amused himself by hunting daily in the vast park, and while engaged in the chase almost forgot the object that had brought him thither. His nights were spent in festivity, and the attraction of female society was not wanting, for bands of fair dames came over from Piacenza. A bridge of boats across the Ticino connected the king's camp with the island on which Montmorency was sta-

tioned, and a similar bridge at another part of the river made communication easy with La Palisse. The Duke d'Alençon, as we have mentioned, was quartered in the Castle of Mirabello.

IV.

OF THE STRATAGEM PRACTISED BY ANTONIO DE LEYVA.

But while abundance was to be found in the camp of the besiegers, and while the French army was contented and even joyous, severe privation was already experienced in Pavia.

Disappointed in the succours he expected to receive from Lodi, De Leyva had already put the garrison on short allowance, and provisions had become so scarce, that the horrors of famine began to be anticipated. Occasionally supplies were obtained by skirmishing parties, but these were in-

efficient for a populous city like Pavia, and were speedily exhausted.

But De Leyva appeared wholly unconcerned by the distress he saw around him. Harsh and inflexible, resolute in the performance of his duty, and callous to the sufferings of others, he looked on the people around him with a cold, unpitying eye. So long as the garrison could be fed, he cared not what became of the citizens.

His worst apprehensions were caused by the mutinous spirit which on several occasions of late had been evinced by the German lanz-knechts under De Hohenzollern. He had tried to allay their discontent by promising them their pay, but as he could not make good his word, his assurances were treated with derision, and the men even threatened, if not paid, to deliver the city to the enemy.

That this would be carried out, De Leyva became convinced by discovering that a secret cor-

respondence existed between the Comte d'Azarnes, one of the German leaders, and Bonnivet. The knowledge of the secret thus obtained he prudently kept to himself, resolving to punish the treachery of Azarnes at a fitting season. As gold, however, must be obtained at whatever risk, he carefully thought over the matter, and at last conceived a stratagem by which he hoped that a supply of money might be safely passed through the French army. During a sortie which he made for the purpose into the park of Mirabello, he despatched an emissary in whom he could confide, with instructions to Lannoy and Pescara, both of whom were at Lodi.

While François, unable to take the city by assault, was proceeding by slower means, a plan was suggested to him by an officer belonging to the Duke d'Alençon, which promised success, and gave great uneasiness to the besieged. This was no less than to divert the main arm of the Ticino,

which flowed past Pavia, into the lesser channel. If the plan could be accomplished, the city, being entirely undefended on this side, must necessarily fall.

Every exertion, therefore, was used by the king to carry the scheme into effect. An enormous number of men were employed in damming up the main arm of the river, and in deepening and widening the channel of the lesser arm so as to receive its waters, and as the work progressed François was greatly elated by the prospect of success, while De Leyva attempted, though vainly, to fortify the exposed part of the city, which, when the bed of the river was laid dry, would be open to attack.

On both sides the opinion now prevailed that Pavia was doomed, but its resolute commander held stoutly on, and would not listen to any terms of capitulation.

Another day, and all would have been over,

when just at the critical moment, while prayers were offered in the Duomo for the preservation of the city, torrents of rain began to fall, and continued to pour down without intermission for several hours, until the swollen waters of the Ticino could no longer be restrained, but, bursting the embankments reared against them, returned to their original channel.

Pavia was saved. Fervent thanksgivings were offered up by the citizens, who regarded the occurrence as providential, and a *Te Deum* was chanted in the Duomo. Discouraged by the ill success of the scheme, François made no attempt to renew it.

Just after this event, which Antonio de Leyva looked upon as a good omen, another incident of a very different nature occurred.

We have said that a large market was held in the park of Mirabello, at which provisions of all kinds were sold by country-folk to the soldiers. One morning, two tall and robust young men,

with handsome and sunburnt visages, and clad like peasants, were allowed to pass through the French camp, there being nothing either in their looks or deportment calculated to excite suspicion. Each led a mule charged with a couple of large casks, apparently filled with wine, and as the two young peasants strode along they laughed and jested with the soldiers.

On arriving at the place where the market was held, they were speedily surrounded by eager customers, and while chaffering with them moved gradually nearer and nearer to the city walls, until it became evident that they had attracted the notice of the sentinels, and they were cautioned by the soldiers with them not to go any farther. The peasants, however, treated the warning as a joke, and went on.

All at once, a troop of cavalry, headed by De Leyva, issued from a sallyport, and dashing at the party, seized the peasants and their mules, and

carried them off into the city before any attempt at rescue could be made by the troops of the Duke d'Alençon, who had witnessed the affair.

As soon as De Leyva was safe within the walls of the city, he gave vent to a hearty fit of laughter, and the two peasants joined in his merriment.

"Admirably executed, by my fay!" exclaimed the governor. "The stratagem has succeeded to a miracle. Little do the enemy dream what rare wine they have allowed to escape them. 'Tis a vintage fit for the king's table—ha! ha! But whom have I to thank for the important service thus rendered me?" he added to the foremost of the peasants. "Unless I am mistaken, it is the Seigneur Pomperant."

"Your excellency is right," replied the other. "Lannoy and Pescara could find no better messenger than myself, so I have come hither disguised, as you see, with my attendant Hugues. Each of those casks contains a thousand golden ducats—

a rich prize for the king, if it had fallen into his hands."

"A good sum, in truth, and if it will not pay the lanz-knechts in full, it will at least stop their mouths for a time," rejoined De Leyva, laughing. "Again I thank you for the service, though I am sorry you will have to remain in this city. There is plenty of revelry, I am told, each night in the king's camp, but there is none here. All we do in Pavia is to fast, pray, and fight."

"I am familiar with beleaguered cities," said Pomperant. "I was in Marseilles during the siege."

"Marseilles endured no privations," rejoined De Leyva. "The port was open, and supplies could be sent in by the fleet. But here we are cut off from everything. May I count on speedy succour from Lannoy and Pescara?"

"I fear not," replied Pomperant. "They are

not in a condition to march upon the king's army. But they expect reinforcements."

"Where is the Duke de Bourbon?" demanded De Leyva.

"In Suabia collecting an army," replied Pomperant. "From what I have heard from his highness he will get together a large force, and, when he returns, I doubt not he will fly to your succour."

"I hope he may not come too late," remarked De Leyva.

"Before setting out, the duke told me that he knew full well your excellency would hold out, and that most assuredly he would be back in time to relieve you."

"Well, I suppose I must be content," said De Leyva. "But I am eager to examine the treasure."

By the governor's orders the casks were then taken to the castello, and on being opened were found full of golden pieces, which De Leyva imme-

diately distributed among the German lanz-knechts, telling them the remainder of their pay was safe in the hands of the Viceroy of Naples, at Lodi, and should be given to them as soon as it could be sent with safety. By this means confidence was restored, and the tendency to mutiny checked.

The time had now arrived for the punishment of the traitor. On the day after the gold had been distributed as above mentioned, De Leyva sent for Azarnes to the castello, and after conversing with him for some time in a friendly manner, called for wine. A cup of Cyprus was filled, and Azarnes drank it unsuspectingly. Another goblet was offered to De Leyva, but, though he raised it to his lips, he took care not to taste it. After a while, De Leyva drew from his breast the letter addressed to Bonnivet which he had intercepted, and, showing it to Azarnes, asked him sternly if it was his writing. With such evidence against him, the unfortunate man did not dare to attempt denial.

"Your silence proclaims your guilt," said De Leyvá. "You deserve death, but act as I enjoin, and I will pardon you."

"I am ready to obey your excellency," rejoined Azarnes.

"Write, then, to Bonnivet that the men are firm, and refuse to deliver up the city," said De Leyva. "Add that pay has been sent them by the Viceroy of Naples, and that succour is daily expected."

Azarnes wrote as commanded, and when the letter was finished, De Leyva took it.

"I will send the letter off at once," he said. "Remain here till I return. I shall not be long absent. I have more to say to you."

And, with a singular look at Azarnes, he quitted the room.

De Leyva had not been gone many minutes, when the unfortunate man was seized with a mortal sickness, and a frightful suspicion crossing him, he examined the other goblet, and found it untouched.

He then knew that he was poisoned, and made for the door, but ere he could reach it his strength utterly forsook him, and he fell on the ground. At this moment De Leyva entered the chamber.

"What! my wine is too potent for you—ha?" he exclaimed.

"You have poisoned me," groaned the dying man.

"I have been compelled to become your executioner," rejoined De Leyva. "I would rather have put you to death publicly, but since justice might have been defeated, I have elected this plan."

The action of the terrible poison was so swift, that ere many minutes Azarnes had ceased to exist.

V.

GEORGE VON FRUNDSBERG.

On quitting Milan on the approach of François I., Bourbon proceeded with Lannoy and Pescara to Lodi, where he remained for a few days, and then announced his intention of proceeding to Germany to raise a fresh army for the Emperor.

"Your highness has my best wishes for the success of your project, but I fear you will fail," said Lannoy.

"If we have to wait till you bring back an

army from Germany, we shall wait long enough," remarked Pescara, sarcastically.

"In less than two months I will be back, and will bring with me ten or twelve thousand men," said Bourbon, confidently.

Counting upon the friendship always professed for him by the Duke of Savoy, and upon the disposition lately shown by that potentate to attach himself zealously to the Imperial cause, Bourbon first directed his course to Turin, and was received as cordially by the prince as he had been after the victory of Romagnano.

Bourbon told the prince his design, frankly explaining to him the enfeebled condition of the Imperial army, and the absolute necessity that existed for its prompt reinforcement.

"I am now going to Suabia," he said, "and with the assistance of the Archduke Ferdinand, I hope to be able to get together a sufficient number of men, but to do this I must have money, for the

Germans will not fight without pay. Herein lies the grand difficulty, and I know not where to turn for aid, unless to your highness. It is in vain to apply to the Emperor. Apparently he has no money to send, for he is terribly in arrear with his own army. Time will not allow application to be made to Henry VIII., even if he should be disposed to yield further subsidies. How say you, prince? Will you generously help me in my need? It will be an incalculable favour to the Emperor as well as to myself, for, unless you aid him at this juncture, he will lose Lombardy, and possibly Naples."

"You shall not sue in vain, prince," returned the Duke of Savoy, graciously. "I will aid you as much for your own sake as for that of the Emperor. Not merely will I empty my treasure for you, but you shall have all my jewels. It shall not be my fault if you do not raise an army."

"By Sainte Barbe!" cried Bourbon, overjoyed.

"I did right to come to your highness. You are a true friend. If François de Valois is compelled to leave Italy, it will be you who will drive him out."

Next day, Bourbon quitted Turin loaded with gold and jewels, and shaped his course at once towards Germany. After visiting the Archduke Ferdinand, by whose aid he was enabled, in an incredibly short space of time, to raise five hundred Burgundian lances and six thousand lanzknechts, he proceeded to Memmingen, for the purpose of obtaining the assistance of the renowned George von Frundsberg.

Of this remarkable personage, who claims a place in our history, it will be necessary to offer a brief preliminary description.

Of gigantic stature, endowed with prodigious strength, truculent in aspect, ferocious in manner and disposition, George von Frundsberg, lord of Mindelheim, more resembled a robber-chief than

a military leader. His appearance was at once formidable and grotesque. His features were large, bloated and inflamed by intemperance, his nose aquiline, his eyes fierce and bloodshot, and overshadowed by black beetling brows. His hair was grizzled, and shorn close to the skull; but his beard was shaggy, and his immense moustaches stuck out like the whiskers of a tiger, imparting an extraordinarily savage character to his physiognomy. His powerful frame had been originally well proportioned, but he had now acquired an ungainly corpulence, which his armour could not conceal.

Von Frundsberg was a furious Lutheran, and, in his zeal for propagating the new doctrines, had perpetrated frightful atrocities. He never spoke of the Pope or the Romish priesthood without being seized by an access of rage; and bore at his girdle a gold chain, with which he had vowed to strangle the Sovereign Pontiff with his own hands.

Having at his command an army of four or five thousand men, Von Frundsberg was a very important ally to gain.

Accompanied by Marx Sittich d'Ems, whom he had appointed to the command of his Burgundian lances, Bourbon visited Von Frundsberg at his castle of Mindelheim, and was entertained by him with rude but profuse hospitality. The fierce Lutheran chief astounded his guests by his capacity for drinking, and he emptied stoup after stoup of Rhenish during the repast, but though they did not follow his example, they laughed at his terrible and impious jests, and Bourbon gained him over by promising that as soon as the French were driven out of Italy he would march with him to Rome, and allow his men to sack the city.

"On that understanding I will join your highness," said Von Frundsberg, "and will bring with me five thousand of the bravest reiters and lanz-

knechts in Suabia—such soldiers as are not to be found in the French camp. They will go wherever I choose to take them, because they know that, if ill paid, they are certain of plunder, and that if they starve one day they will feast the next. Like myself, they are staunch Lutherans, all excommunicated by the Pope, and their great delight is to torture and slay the priests of Baal, to break their idols, and plunder their temples of their gold and silver ornaments. By my father's bones! what sanctuaries we have stripped. What tall candlesticks! what weighty chalices! what splendid cups we have carried off! At Rome there will be no end of plunder. Every church contains a mine of wealth, and if the priests hide their plate and vessels we will soon force them to bring them out—ho! ho! There is no better amusement than torturing a priest. It is the height of my ambition to plunder Saint Peter's, to rifle the temple of Antichrist of its treasures, to destroy its altars, and wash

out its abominations in the blood of its priests; and if the arch-pontiff himself falls into my hands, I have sworn to hang him with a chain fabricated for the purpose. Here it is," he added, displaying it. "One must show respect even to the Pope—à tout seigneur tout honneur!—ho! ho!"

Though disgusted by the sacrilegious wretch, Bourbon constrained himself, and led him to believe that he shared his opinions, and was so lavish in his promises of plunder, that, before the repast was concluded, Von Frundsberg had engaged to share his fortunes.

"Promise to take me to Rome," he cried. "Promise me the treasures of Saint Peter's and the Vatican for my soldiers. Promise me Antichrist for myself," he cried, with a ferocious and stunning laugh, "and I am yours body and soul."

"I promise you all you ask," rejoined Bourbon.

"Then the compact is made," said Von Frundsberg, striking the table with his tremendous fist,

and making all the goblets upon it rattle. "We will march for Lombardy to-morrow. Meanwhile, we will drink confusion to François de Valois. You will pledge me in that toast?" he added, draining his capacious cup.

Bourbon and Marx Sittich did him reason, and the carouse was continued to a late hour.

Bourbon did not allow the ardour of his newly-acquired ally to cool, but held him to his promise to march without delay. When Von Frundsberg ordered his men to get ready, and told them whither they were going, they shouted enthusiastically, feeling sure that if they once entered Italy they would find their way to Rome, whither their leader had engaged to take them.

Proceeding by forced marches, Bourbon conducted his newly-acquired army by Lindau and Feldkirch to Coire, and thence, across the Splugen, into Italy.

When he reappeared at Lodi at the head of this

force, Lannoy and Pescara were filled with amazement, and though they congratulated him on his extraordinary success with feigned heartiness, it was easy to perceive they were greatly mortified.

Bourbon laughed secretly at their chagrin. His position was now totally changed in regard to them, for the army he had raised was his own, and only recognised him as general.

"I told you I would bring back twelve thousand men with me," he said to Pescara. "I have kept my word, as you see."

"I did not think it possible, I own," rejoined the other. "You have employed your time well, whereas we have done little during your absence. But De Leyva still holds out."

"I know it," said Bourbon. "We must march instantly to his relief."

"With the reinforcement you have brought, we need not hesitate to attack the king," rejoined Pes-

cara. "I have carefully prepared a plan of action, which I feel assured will be crowned with success. I will submit it to you, and if you approve it, we will act upon it."

"'Tis a good plan, and well considered," observed Lannoy.

"Then I will adopt it," said Bourbon. "Let us fly to victory."

VI.

HOW FRANÇOIS I. REFUSED TO RAISE THE SIEGE OF PAVIA.

WHILE Bourbon was occupied in collecting a fresh army in Suabia, renewed efforts were made by Clement VII. to bring about a peace between the contending powers. The conduct of the negotiations was confided by the Pope to his datary, Giovan Mattheo Giberto, and this personage first addressed himself to Lannoy, proposing a truce of five years, the terms of which should be arranged by the Supreme Pontiff. But Lannoy haughtily rejected the proposal, declaring he would never

treat with the King of France so long as that monarch retained a foot of ground in Italy.

Though foiled in the onset, Giberto did not despair of accomplishing his object, and, proceeding to the French camp, obtained an interview with the king. Having heard what he had to say, François replied:

"The moment is ill chosen to make this offer to me. Tell his Holiness that I did not cross the Alps with an army of thirty thousand men to make a profitless peace with the Emperor. I brought my troops into Lombardy to retake the duchy of Milan, and I shall not be deterred from my purpose by promises or threats. I shall speedily be master of Pavia, and shall then pursue my conquests. You shall hear my plans, for I calculate upon the Pope's assistance in carrying them out. I am about to send the Duke of Albany to Naples with six thousand fantassins and six hundred lances, to be detached from my own army. At Leghorn, Albany

will be reinforced by three thousand men brought thither by my fleet, and commanded by the valiant Renzo da Ceri. Thus augmented, the army will march on through the Roman States, where it will be further increased by four thousand Italian soldiers promised me by Orsini."

"Sire," returned the datary, "although I do not approve of the proposed expedition, I venture to engage that it will not be opposed by his Holiness, who will, I make no doubt, allow the Duke of Albany a free passage through the Roman States, and render him other assistance. But have you well considered the prudence of the step you are about to take? It is known that the Duke de Bourbon is levying a vast number of troops in Suabia, and will probably collect together a large army. Is it wise to reduce your own forces to this extent?"

"My object is to create a diversion, and so weaken the strength of the Imperial army," rejoined François. "When Lannoy finds that I have de-

spatched a force to attack Naples, he will necessarily send back all the best of the Spanish troops for the defence of the city, and will thus leave Lombardy unprotected. As soon as the bulk of his forces is withdrawn, the whole of the Milanese will fall into my hands, and having garrisoned the chief cities, I shall march on to Naples."

"It is a bold but hazardous manœuvre, sire," replied Giberto, "and I trust success may attend it. I grieve to find that my efforts to bring about a peace, which might be even more advantageous than conquest to your majesty, have proved ineffectual. But let me assure you that his Holiness loves you as a son, and will certainly aid you, so far as he can, without offending the Emperor."

The plan thus propounded by François to the datary was carried into effect. When Lannoy was informed that the Duke of Albany had marched with a large force to Naples, he became seriously alarmed, and his first impulse, as François had anti-

cipated, was to send back all his soldiers for the defence of the city; but he was earnestly dissuaded from the step by Pescara.

"The fate of Naples will be decided in Lombardy," said this astute general. "If François is victorious, he will march off instantly to the south of Italy to complete his conquest. If we win, we have nothing to fear from Albany's expedition."

Governed by this reasoning, the force of which he acknowledged, Lannoy remained with his troops at Lodi, thus defeating the king's manœuvre, while Albany was allowed to pursue his march through Italy unmolested.

The army of the King of France was still further diminished by the loss of six thousand Grisons, of whose assistance he was deprived in a very singular manner, as we shall proceed to relate.

Among the many adventurers brought to the surface during this troublous time in Italy, one of the most remarkable was Gian Giacomo Medequin.

He had filled the office of secretary to Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and while in that capacity betrayed the duke's secrets to the French. Discovering his treachery, Sforza determined to get rid of him, and, with this view, charged him with a letter to the governor of Musso, a small fortified town situated in a remote part of the duchy at the north of the Lake of Como. Suspecting mischief, the unscrupulous Medequin opened the letter, and found that it was an order to the governor to throw him into the lake.

On making this discovery, instead of seeking safety in flight, Medequin formed a plan of vengeance, and, proceeding to Musso, sought the lieutenant of the fort, to whom he delivered a letter which he had forged, purporting to come from Sforza, ordering the lieutenant to arrest the governor, and commit the custody of the fort to Medequin. The forged order was obeyed, and Medequin became master of the garrison. To

screen himself from the consequences of this audacious act, it was necessary that he should render some important service to the Imperial army. He resolved, therefore, to obtain possession of the Castle of Chiavenna, an important stronghold belonging to the Grisons, and lying in ambush with a sufficient force, he succeeded at last in seizing upon the governor of the place. No sooner had he secured his prey than he rode towards Chiavenna with a strong escort, and demanded to speak with the châtelaine. When she appeared on the walls, she beheld her husband, bound hand and foot, and kneeling before Medequin, who held an executioner's sword in his hand, ready to smite off the unfortunate man's head.

"If you would save your husband's life, madame, you will instantly deliver up the city," he shouted to her.

"Heed not the threat," said the captive; "I am ready to die."

"Be speedy in your decision, madame, or I strike," cried Medequin, raising the sword.

"Hold!" exclaimed the affrighted châtelaine. "I cannot see my husband perish thus. Open the gates."

So Chiavenna was delivered up.

The loss of this stronghold caused great alarm to the Grisons, who were not without apprehension of further disasters, as their country was almost defenceless, the élite of their army being with François I. before Pavia. Peremptory orders were instantly sent to these men to return without delay, and in spite of all the efforts made by the king and his generals to detain them, they at once quitted the French camp.

By this bold device, François was unexpectedly deprived of the services of six thousand of his troops, and at a moment when he could least spare them, while Medequin secured the protection of Pescara and Lannoy.

Ill fortune seemed to attend the king at this juncture. The important and strongly garrisoned fort of Sant Angelo was taken by Pescara. A Milanese captain, named Palavicini, in the service of the King of France, had advanced with a strong force towards Cremona, with the intention of cutting off the communication between that city and Lodi, when Francesco Sforza, who had retired thither, sallied forth at the head of fourteen hundred men, attacked Palavicini, and put his troops to flight.

This disaster was vexatious to François, but he shortly afterwards sustained a far heavier blow. The valiant Giovanni de' Medici, who, it will be remembered, had distinguished himself so greatly on the side of the Imperialists in the previous campaign, had now passed over with his band, consisting of four thousand men, to the French camp, his motive for the step being inability to obtain pay for his men from the Emperor. The

defection of so daring and skilful a leader as Medici was sensibly felt by the Imperialists, but his services were quickly lost by François.

While engaged in a skirmish with Antonio de Leyva, who had sallied forth to attack him, and whom he had forced to retreat with heavy loss, the brave young Italian leader was wounded in the heel by a bullet from an arquebuss, and was conveyed to Piacenza. On this, his troop immediately disbanded, refusing to serve under any other leader.

These losses, following each other in rapid succession, were not without effect upon the king, but he continued firm in his resolution to reduce Pavia, and would not listen to any suggestion to raise the siege.

When intelligence was brought him that Bourbon had returned from Suabia at the head of twelve thousand men, and that the Imperial army, thus powerfully reinforced, was about to march to

succour the beleaguered city, and compel him to give them battle, François held a council of war, rather for the purpose of acquainting his generals with his designs than of asking their opinion.

Though the king's sentiments were well known to all the leaders, several of them gave their opinion stoutly in opposition to his majesty, and the Marshal de Chabannes urged him strongly to raise the siege, avoid a battle, and retire to the Castle of Binasco.

"It is the interest of the Imperialists to fight," said the marshal, "because they cannot afford to wait. They have not wherewithal to pay their troops, and can only keep them together by promise of a battle. Your majesty's interest is to avoid an engagement, since by delay you can accomplish all you desire, without risk and without loss. I will not venture to point out the disastrous consequences that must ensue, if the issue of the battle should be adverse to us; but I beseech you to

weigh them before coming to a decision which you may hereafter rue. My counsel, I know, will be distasteful to your majesty, but it is my duty to offer it."

Several of the other leaders concurred with the veteran marshal in opinion, and recommended delay.

"Were I to follow your advice, marshal," cried François—"were I to raise the siege of Pavia, and retire to Binasco, as you suggest, Bourbon would say I retreated before him."

"And with reason, sire," cried Bonnivet, indignantly. "I give you no such timid counsel, but advise you to remain where you are. Let the foe attack you if he dares—the inevitable result will be his own discomfiture. What shameful counsel is this you give to the king, messeigneurs? Would you have him belie his glorious career? Would you have him forfeit the laurels won at Marignan? Shall a base soldier like De Leyva

have it in his power to boast that he has compelled our valiant king to retreat? Shall the traitor Bourbon be allowed to say—as he *will* say—that his royal master has fled before him?"

"Never!" exclaimed François. "By Saint Louis! he shall never say that!"

"You overrate our difficulties and dangers," continued Bonnivet, addressing the marshals; "but you do not take into account our resources. Bethink you that the flower of the French chivalry is here, with the king at its head. Do not let us dishonour ourselves by precautions unworthy of his majesty and of us. It is upon the plains of Pavia, and not under shelter of the walls of Binasco, that we must seek for safety. Such caution is out of place. The king's glory is in our keeping. Europe will demand a strict account of our charge. We must answer by victory or death."

"You have misapprehended me, Bonnivet," said Chabannes. "No one is more anxious than my-

self for the glory of the king. But I would not have him give undue advantage to the foe. Our army is much reduced in number, and discouraged by this lengthened siege, whereas the enemy is newly recruited by troops who have endured no hardship, but are stimulated to fight by promises of plunder. My opinion is shared by all the elder leaders."

"You have the wisdom of Nestor, marshal," rejoined Bonnivet, sarcastically, "and I listen to every word that falls from you with respect. But I cannot suffer the king to be guided by your counsel. His majesty has more need of the valour of his chiefs, at this juncture, than of their advice. As to yourself, marshal, were you to lose this chance of distinction, you would ever after regret it. It would be the first time you have sought to avoid a meeting with the enemy."

"Enough, Bonnivet," cried François. "I do not discern the dangers pointed out to me; but if

they exist, I remain unmoved. I will await the foe in these intrenchments. When the battle comes, despite his age and prudence, no one, I am well assured, will display more ardour than Chabannes. Never shall it be said that the King of France fled before a rebellious subject. Here, on these plains of Pavia, I will punish the traitor, and I call on you, messeigneurs, to aid me in the task."

"Your majesty shall not call in vain," was the general reply.

VII.

IN WHAT MANNER POMPERANT PROCURED A SUPPLY OF POWDER FOR THE GOVERNOR OF PAVIA.

By this time Pavia was almost reduced to the last extremity. Such was the vigilance of the besiegers, that no supplies whatever, unless obtained during a skirmish made by the active governor, could be introduced.

The horrors of famine were aggravated by the rigours of an unusually severe winter. Many persons perished from cold, as from inanition. Pieces of costly furniture and carved wood were broken up, and numerous habitations were half de-

stroyed in the attempt to procure fuel. But Antonio de Leyva remained firm as ever—deaf to prayers and supplications, unmoved by menaces.

Once more the lanz-knechts had begun to clamour for pay, when at last the governor, driven to his wits' end, resorted to a course often practised by the Lutheran leaders. Seizing all the gold and silver cups, vessels, images, and reliquaries belonging to the churches, he caused them to be melted down and coined into money, which he distributed among the mutinous lanz-knechts. De Leyva sought to mitigate the wrath of the priests by solemnly vowing to indemnify them for the loss of their plate; but he afterwards excused himself by declaring that he had made the promise in the Emperor's name, and that it was for his majesty, not for him, to replace the treasures of which the churches had been despoiled.

But not only did the governor of Pavia want food and money, but his stock of powder was well-

nigh exhausted, and it seemed impossible to obtain a fresh supply. Pomperant, however, who had remained within the city, enduring all the privations and hardships to which the garrison was exposed, undertook to remedy this difficulty.

Having fully explained his design to De Leyva, who approved of it and engaged to have all in readiness for his return, Pomperant set out at night-time on the expedition, accompanied only by the faithful Hugues. They were both fully armed and mounted on the fleetest horses that could be found in the garrison, and, issuing suddenly from the sally-port, contrived to gain a wood skirting the wall of the park of Mirabello, and thence, after narrowly escaping capture, made their way to the Castle of Sant Angelo, which they knew to be in possession of the Imperialists.

Here Pomperant found Bourbon, and a joyful meeting took place between the duke and his devoted partisan, who had not met for nearly three

months. On learning Pomperant's errand, Bourbon at once gave him a band of forty reiters, each of whom was furnished with a large bag of powder. Attended by this troop, and accompanied by Hugues, who likewise carried a bag of powder at his saddle-bow, Pomperant quitted Sant Angelo when it grew dark, and got within a league of Pavia without encountering any material obstacle.

But danger was now at hand. So completely was Pavia surrounded, that it was impossible to enter the city without passing through the enemy's lines. Avoiding the intrenchments thrown around the main body of the French army, Pomperant approached a point where there were fewest difficulties in the way, and, dashing past the sentinels, succeeded in gaining the wood bordering the park.

But the alarm was instantly given, and a mounted picket at once started in pursuit. The horses of these troopers being fresh, they soon

gained upon the reiters, and a conflict appeared unavoidable.

While Pomperant was straining every nerve to reach Pavia, the horse of one of the reiters stumbled and fell, and, ere the man could disengage himself, he was surrounded by the French troopers, several of whom fired at him as he lay on the ground. During the fray the bag of powder exploded. Amid the confusion and dismay caused by this incident Pomperant and his band escaped, and entering the city through the sally-port, were warmly welcomed by the governor.

VIII.

HOW MARCELLINE D'HERMENT CAME TO PAVIA TO SOLICIT HER BROTHER'S PARDON FROM THE KING.

A FEW days afterwards, Pomperant, attended by the reiters, made a sortie from Pavia, and as he was returning, after an unsuccessful quest for provisions, he descried some half-dozen French men-at-arms advancing towards him at a rapid pace. No sooner, however, did this little troop discern their danger, than they galloped back towards the French camp. It then appeared that they were merely acting as an escort to a lady, who refused to return with them. Seeing this,

Pomperant ordered the reiters to halt, and rode towards her alone.

The lady was young, attired in a riding-dress of green velvet, and there was something in her appearance that reminded him of Marcelline. As he drew nearer, the resemblance seemed to increase, till at last Pomperant, who scarcely dared to trust the evidence of his senses, could no longer doubt. It was Marcelline herself. Uttering a cry of surprise and delight, he pressed towards her, and the next moment was by her side.

"Do my eyes deceive me?" he exclaimed, gazing rapturously at her. "Do I indeed behold Marcelline d'Herment, whom I have so long mourned as lost! Speak, and reassure me. I thought you had perished beneath the walls of Marseilles."

"Yes, 'tis I, in good truth, Pomperant," she rejoined. "I was not even injured by the explosion which you supposed had caused my death.

I have been most anxious to inform you of my escape, but could find no means of communicating with you."

"Had you done so, you would have saved me months of grief," he cried. "But I will not reproach you. My delight at meeting you again is too great to allow the presence of any other sentiment. I care not even to ask by what strange and fortunate chance you are here. Enough that I behold you."

"We meet only to part," she rejoined. "But you shall hear what has brought me to Pavia. When I explain to you the motive of my journey your wonder will cease. My brother, the Seigneur d'Herment, has been condemned to death by the Parliament of Paris, and is now in the Conciergerie waiting the execution of the sentence. At Aix, where I had an interview with his majesty after the siege of Marseilles, he graciously promised that if I had any favour to ask from him, he would

grant it. When I heard that my unfortunate brother had been doomed to death, I bethought me of the promise. By my entreaties I obtained a respite from the Chancellor Duprat, and immediately set out for Italy, and, undeterred by all difficulties and dangers from which one less resolute than myself might have shrunk, crossed the Alps, and, after some unavoidable delays, reached the French camp before Pavia yesterday. I easily obtained an audience of the king, who was in his tent, and when I threw myself on my knees before him, he said, 'I recollect you well. You are one of the heroines of Marseilles. I have not forgotten my promise to you.' 'I have come to claim fulfilment of that promise, sire,' I replied. But when I explained my errand, he looked very grave, and said, coldly, 'You ask more than I can perform. I cannot pardon your brother. As an accomplice of the traitor Bourbon he must die." 'Sire,' I rejoined, 'I am equally guilty with my

brother, since I accompanied the Constable de Bourbon in his flight.' 'You have made amends by your conduct at Marseilles,' he replied; 'but your brother's case is different. You are too loyal to ask me to spare a traitor, even though he should be of your own blood.' 'Your royal word has never yet been broken, sire,' I rejoined. 'I hold you to your promise.' For a few moments he looked displeased, and I trembled, for I expected a refusal. Without making a remark, however, he signed a warrant, which was lying on a table near him, and gave it to me, saying, as he did so, 'There is the pardon. Deliver that to the Chancellor Duprat, and your brother will be set free.'"

"Nobly done!" exclaimed Pomperant.

"Nobly done indeed!" cried Marcelline. "And I shall ever bless him for his clemency. Oh! Pomperant, how could you draw sword against such a king?"

"Because I have sworn to follow Bourbon, and shall stand by him to the last," he rejoined. "Hear me, Marcelline. We are now on the eve of a decisive battle, which will either result in the downfal of François de Valois, or in the utter destruction of Bourbon and his followers. Have I not your good wishes for success?"

"Pomperant, I have told you that I am loyal to the king. After his great generosity towards me, can I nourish any treasonable sentiments against him? My prayer will be that you may escape, but I shall also pray that the king may be the victor."

"If you so pray, you will pray for my death, Marcelline. Bourbon has told me that if François should ever give him battle, he will conquer or die on the field. If he falls, I shall not survive."

"You have done wrong in thus attaching yourself to a rebel, Pomperant. If you persist in your treason, I must tear you from my heart, whatever the effort may cost me."

"Oh! say not so, Marcelline! Better we had never met than you should use such cruel language towards me. Better I should have thought you lost for ever than find you changed."

"I am not changed, Pomperant. But I will not continue to love a traitor and rebel. Quit the service of the king's enemies. Seek some place of safety, and when I have obtained my brother's pardon, I will return and join you. Will you do this? Will you fly with me now? Come! come! you shall have all my love. But if you stay here, you will behold me no more."

"You tempt me sorely, Marcelline. But I cannot — must not — yield. I cannot sacrifice my honour even to my love. I am vowed to Bourbon, as I have told you, and shall follow him to the last. Think you I could desert him now?"

"Then you must forget me, for I shall hold you unworthy of my love, and tear you from my heart. Farewell!"

"We have not yet parted," cried Pomperant.

"Fortune has placed you in my hands. You must go with me to Pavia."

"To Pavia!" she exclaimed. "Never!"

And she turned with the intention of galloping back to the French camp, but Pomperant seized her bridle and detained her.

"You are my prisoner," he said.

"You cannot mean this, Pomperant?" she rejoined, in alarm. "You will not detain me against my will. My brother's life is at stake. You will be answerable for his fate should he be put to death."

"Have no fears about your brother," said Pomperant. "I will find a faithful messenger to take the warrant to Duprat."

"Pomperant," said Marcelline, "you will not dishonour your knightly character by detaining me against my will?"

"No," he replied, after a great effort, "I will not hinder you. You are free. But do not return to the French camp," he added, perceiving she was

about to ride in that direction. "I will send Hugues with you. He is amongst yon troop of reiters. Take him with you to France."

"I have a servant at Novara, and shall be safe when I arrive there," she rejoined. "This conduct is worthy of you, Pomperant."

"It has been a misfortune to me that I have ever loved you, Marcelline," he rejoined, sadly. "I must try to banish all thoughts of you in the strife. If I fall, bestow a tear on me. If I escape, we may meet again."

"Perhaps so," she replied. "Heaven only knows what is in store for us."

Without a word more, Pomperant called to Hugues, who instantly obeyed the summons and rode towards them.

"Attend this lady to Novara," he said, "and then return as best you can to Pavia."

Hugues bowed assent, and Pomperant, drawing near to Marcelline, said, in a low, deep voice,

"Are we to part thus?"

"We must," she rejoined in the same tone. "Farewell!—forget me!"

"Would I could forget her!" ejaculated Pomperant, as he rode back with the reiters to Pavia.

IX.

HOW PESCARA CAUSED A BREACH TO BE MADE IN THE WALLS OF THE PARK OF MIRABELLO.

On quitting Lodi, the Imperial army consisted of upwards of twenty-one thousand men, more than half of whom had been raised by Bourbon. The lanz-knechts were commanded by Von Frundsberg, the reiters by Marx Sittich d'Ems, and the Burgundian light horse by the Comte de Salms.

Pescara's chief reliance was upon a corps of Basque arquebussiers, whom he had trained to rush upon the enemy, discharge their pieces, and retreat with extraordinary rapidity. These Basques formed

a corps fifteen hundred strong, and were all unerring marksmen. Moreover, they were armed with short sharp swords, which they could fix on the top of their arquebusses, and use with terrible effect against cavalry.

During its march the army extended for nearly three leagues. The vanguard was commanded by Pescara, with whom were the best of the Spanish cavalry, and the before-mentioned Basque arquebussiers. Then came the Marquis del Vasto with his battalion, and after him Lannoy with the Neapolitan soldiers. Then came five hundred light horse under Castrioto, then the lanz-knechts under Von Frundsberg, and lastly the reiters and Burgundian cavalry. The rear-guard was commanded by Bourbon. The whole of the army was in excellent condition, and though the men were unpaid, they were content with the promises of plunder held out to them by their leaders. Under such circumstances, however, it was incumbent that a

battle should take place with as little delay as possible, and on this point both Bourbon and Pescara were agreed.

Instead of marching direct upon Pavia, the Imperial generals proceeded towards Milan, as if designing to attack that city, hoping by the device to draw François from his intrenched camp, but the king was either too well informed of their design or too wary, for he would not quit his position.

Finding he did not move, they altered their course and gradually approached Pavia, and as they drew near to the French camp frequent skirmishes took place between troops of cavalry on either side, in which, owing to the address and daring of Pescara and Del Vasto, the advantage generally remained with the Imperialists.

By the king's command Bonnivet had been despatched with four hundred light horse to watch the movements of the enemy, and while thus em-

ployed in the neighbourhood of Belgiojoso, he was surprised by Pescara, and after a sharp skirmish compelled to retreat.

On learning that the enemy were now close at hand, the king quitted his quarters at San Lanfranco, and removed to the neighbourhood of the Certosa, a magnificent convent situated at the northern extremity of the park of Mirabello.

By this time the whole of the Imperial army had come up, and was encamped upon a plain, between two canals, on the east of Pavia, about a league from the walls of the city, and about half a league from the advanced guard of the French army. The hostile camps were separated by the Vernacula, a small but deep river, with steep banks. The spot chosen for their camp by the Imperialists was protected by a rising ground from the French artillery, while the Vernacula served them as a trench.

After carefully studying the position of the

French army, Pescara became convinced that it would be impossible to force them in their intrenchments, and as all attempts to draw them forth had proved ineffectual, some new expedient must be adopted. At last he hit upon a plan, which he proposed to Bourbon.

"Since all other means have failed," he said, "I propose to proceed in this manner. The attack must be made to-night. My design is to make a breach in the walls of the park of Mirabello sufficiently large to allow the passage of our whole army. This can be readily accomplished in a few hours, and without artillery, if we are undiscovered. The walls can be battered down by rams and other engines, and while the operations are going on, false attacks must be made at two or three different points of the French camp, so as to distract their attention. Once within the park, we shall have nothing between us and the king, whose quarters are now near the Certosa. If we cannot compel

him to give us battle, we can at least succour Pavia."

"I like the plan, and doubt not it will succeed," remarked Bourbon. "But De Leyva must be informed of it, that he may hold himself in readiness to sally forth with the garrison."

"I will engage to take a message to him," said Pomperant, who was standing by.

"Tell him to make ready to-night," said Pescara; "and when he hears cannon fired in the park to come forth with his men."

"It shall be done," replied Pomperant. "It is well you have resolved to execute your plan without delay, for Pavia is reduced almost to the last extremity."

About an hour before midnight Pescara put his battalion in motion, and after making a wide circuit, so as to avoid the French pickets, he approached the farther side of the park of Mirabello. Del Vasto followed. Next came Castrioto,

with his squadron of five hundred light horse. Then came Lannoy, with his Neapolitan soldiers. Then the Burgundian cavalry under the Comte de Salms; and lastly Bourbon, Von Frundsberg, and Marx Sittich d'Ems, with the German lanzknechts and reiters. The night was so dark, and the movement so noiselessly executed, that no suspicion was entertained by the French.

As the mighty host thus silently collected upon a plain on the north side of the park, they were concealed from the French sentinels by a thick intervening wood. From this plain the dark outline of Pavia, with its numerous lofty towers, its Duomo and castle, could be discerned, and the sounds that disturbed the silence of the night proclaimed that the garrison were astir.

No sooner did Pescara reach that portion of the walls which he had selected for his purpose, than a large body of pioneers set to work to batter them down with rams, huge beams of wood, and other

engines. But the walls had been very solidly built by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, and offered a more obstinate resistance than had been expected. Dawn was at hand before a sufficiently large breach could be made.

While this operation was proceeding, two false attacks, as preconcerted, had been made upon the French camp, accompanied by a constant discharge of artillery; but in spite of this precaution the plan was discovered, and communicated to François.

As soon as the breach was practicable, the Marquis del Vasto, in obedience to Pescara's injunctions, dashed into the park with his battalion, and hastened to the Castle of Mirabello, which he attacked and took without difficulty, dispersing the troops by whom it was garrisoned.

So far success had crowned the attempt. But a sudden check was now experienced.

X.

THE BATTLE.

As we have just mentioned, intelligence of the movements of the Imperialists, and of their probable plans, had been conveyed to the king. Overjoyed by the tidings—for he was all eagerness for the fray—François, who was sleeping in his tent, immediately arose, and caused his esquires to array him in a magnificent suit of mail, that had lately been fabricated for him at Milan. Then donning his glittering casque, with its long white plumes, which drooped down his back, and buckling on

his sword, he mounted his stoutest war-horse—a powerful black charger—and rode forth.

As soon as he appeared he was joined by the Duke d'Alençon and the Marshal de Chabannes, both of whom were fully armed and accoutred, and mounted on barded steeds. With them was a throng of knightly personages, composed of the chief officers of the crown, the young nobles ordinarily in attendance upon the king, and the guard.

By this time it had become light, and as François galloped forward with the brilliant cortége we have described into the park, he could see the fugitives from the Castle of Montibello, pursued by the cavalry of Del Vasto. He could also distinguish Pescara's battalion pouring in through the breach.

"Call forth my men-at-arms, and let the Seneschal d'Armagnac fire upon the insolent foe," he cried.

Scarcely was the order issued, when D'Armag-

nac, who had already posted his artillery on a rising ground in the park, opened a terrible fire upon the Spaniards who were passing through the breach, and not only caused great destruction among them, but threw them into such disorder, that they fled for shelter to a hollow where they were safe from the murderous fire.

"Ha! by Saint Denis, they are routed already!" exclaimed the king, laughing. "Charge them!" he added to the Duke d'Alençon, who, on receiving the order, immediately put himself at the head of two companies of horse, and rode towards the hollow, whither the fugitives had retreated.

Meantime, D'Armagnac had kept up such an incessant and well-directed fire, that the entrance of Pescara's battalion through the breach was effectually checked.

Thus the plan of the Spanish general seemed to be foiled, and if the king had contented himself with crushing the troops of Del Vasto, who were

now lodged in the Castle of Mirabello, while the breach was rendered impracticable by the artillery, he might have gained the day. But his valorous and impetuous disposition caused him to reject the counsels of prudence. He burned to mingle with the fight.

"By Saint Louis!" he cried to Bonnivet, who was sheathed from head to foot in glittering mail, and bestrode a powerful charger, "I cannot look tamely on and allow the cannon to do the work for me. I must give battle to the foe. I must punish Bourbon's presumption."

"The enemy is half beaten already, sire," rejoined Bonnivet. "Pescara's plan has utterly failed. Your majesty has only to strike the blow to complete the victory."

"I will do it!" exclaimed the chivalrous king. "I should be unworthy of victory if I neglected to ensure it. Bid the army advance. I will give battle to the enemy outside the park."

"Be advised by me, sire, and remain where you are," said the Marshal de Chabannes. "Victory is certain. Leave nothing to hazard."

"By Heaven! I will not remain here another instant!—Montjoye! Saint Denis!—en avant, messeigneurs!—en avant!"

The trumpets sounded loudly, and the king, attended by all his train of knights, nobles, and esquires, moved with the main body of the army towards the breach.

When he perceived this unlucky movement, D'Armagnac, much to his grief, was compelled to cease firing, and the Spaniards, now freed from the murderous discharges he had poured upon them, rallied and prepared to return to the plain.

It was a glorious sight as François, with all his host, passed through the breach and confronted the Imperialists, who were drawn out in battle array on the plain. All his foes were before him. Bourbon was there with his lanz-knechts, reiters,

and Burgundian lances—Pescara with his Spaniards and Basques—Castrioto with his light horse—Lannoy with his Neapolitan cavalry.

Bourbon watched the brilliant host as it deployed upon the plain, and as he followed the movements of the king, whose lofty stature and magnificent armour revealed him to all eyes, he thought that the hour of vengeance had come. On either side there was confident anticipation of victory. François made sure of overthrowing his enemies, and punishing the audacious rebel who had invaded his kingdom, while Bourbon felt equally certain of vengeance.

No sooner had the king so imprudently quitted the park with his host, than Del Vasto abandoned the Castle of Mirabello, of which he had taken possession, and, hurrying after them with his three thousand Spanish fantassins, attacked the French rear.

At the same time De Leyva issued from the

gates of Pavia with the whole of the garrison and engaged with Chabot de Brion, who had been left to oppose him with a very inferior force.

When drawn up for battle, the French army formed a very extended line, the right wing being commanded by the Marshal de Chabannes, and the left by the Duke d'Alençon. Between the right wing and the main body, with whom was the king, were the Black Bands, commanded by the Duke of Suffolk. On the left was a corps of ten thousand Swiss, commanded by Diesbach.

The Imperial army likewise formed a long line, but was divided into a great number of squadrons all ready to act together, or separately, as circumstances might dictate.

No sooner was his line formed than the fiery French king, who was all impatience for action, bade the trumpets sound, and called to his gendarmes to charge.

Couching his long lance, and closely attended

by Bonnivet and all his young nobles and esquires, François hurled himself against Castrioto, who, with his squadron of light horse drawn up in a close square, awaited his attack. The shock was terrific and irresistible. Down went horse and man before the French chivalry, and Castrioto was transfixed by the king's own lance.

Their leader gone, the horsemen could not rally, but were quickly dispersed, while the victorious king, without pausing, turned his arms against Lannoy and his Neapolitans, almost as speedily routing them as he had done the horse of Castrioto.

"Your majesty seems to have decided the battle with a blow," remarked Bonnivet, as they stopped to breathe their horses, while the men-at-arms pursued the fugitives.

"At last, I am Duke of Milan," said François, laughing, and fully persuaded he had gained the victory.

But he was speedily undeceived. Pescara had

chosen this moment, when the squadrons of Castrioto and Lannoy were routed, to bring up his Basque arquebussiers. Advancing rapidly within a short distance of the French gendarmes, these unerring marksmen fired with deadly effect, retreating before their opponents, encumbered by their heavy armour, could touch them.

These attacks were renewed till most serious damage was done to the king's squadron, and many of his brave captains shot, for the aim of the Basques was taken at the leaders.

It was in this terrible conflict with the Basques that the valiant Seigneur de la Trémouille, who had been recalled by the king from Milan, was shot through the head and heart. Galeazzo de San Severino, chief equerry of the king, was slain at the same time. Louis d'Ars was dismounted and trampled to death amid the press, and the Comte de Tonnerre was so hacked to pieces that he could scarcely be recognised. Many other nobles and valiant knights were slain.

Meanwhile, Del Vasto, who had brought his three thousand fantassins into action, profiting by the disorder into which the gendarmes had been thrown, attacked the battalion of Swiss commanded by Jean Diesbach, with whom were the Marshals Montmorency and Fleuranges. But the Swiss did not maintain their former character for bravery on this occasion, and, in spite of the efforts of Montmorency and Fleuranges, both of whom were taken prisoners, they fled, while Diesbach, unable to restrain them, and overcome by shame, sought death amid the enemy.

An important movement was now made by Bourbon. Ordering Von Frundsberg and Sittich to lengthen their battalion, he enveloped the Black Bands under the Duke of Suffolk, and completely exterminated them. Both Suffolk and the Comte de Vaudemont were now slain.

Bourbon next directed his victorious lanz-knechts against the right wing of the French, which had

become detached from the main body of the army, and enveloped it, as he had done the Black Bands.

In this conflict the brave Clermont d'Amboise was slain, and the veteran Marshal de Chabannes, while rallying his men, had his horse killed under him, and was taken prisoner by a Spanish captain named Castaldo. Chabannes, who was wounded, declared his name and rank to his captor, and desired to be taken to a place of safety. Castaldo agreed, and was removing him from the conflict, when they encountered another Spanish soldier, named Buzarto.

"Hold!" exclaimed the new comer, fiercely. "I claim a share in the prize."

"Pass on," rejoined Castaldo. "The prisoner is mine by right of war. I have taken him."

"You refuse to share him with me?" demanded Buzarto, in a threatening tone.

"I do," rejoined the other, sternly. "And I counsel you not to meddle with me."

"And you expect a large ransom—eh?" said Buzarto.

"A princely ransom," rejoined Castaldo, glancing at his prisoner. "I have to do with a marshal of France."

"A marshal of France!" exclaimed Buzarto, furiously. "Then he shall belong to neither of us."

And levelling his arquebuss at the noble veteran, who had fought in a hundred battles, he shot him dead—an infamous act, which doomed its perpetrator to general execration.

Meanwhile, the king had thrown himself into the thickest of the fight. His lance having long since been broken, he had drawn his trenchant sword, and, like a paladin of old, dealt blows right and left, and did not refuse a hand-to-hand combat when offered him.

Already, as we have shown, he had slain Castrioto, and now several others fell by his hand. Among them was a knight from the Franche-

Comté, named Andelot, with whom François had a long conflict.

While drawing breath after this encounter, he heard shouts on the right, and, turning at the sound, beheld the flying bands of the Swiss mercenaries.

"Great Heavens!" he exclaimed, in mingled amazement and indignation, "what means that rush of men?"

"The Swiss are retreating, sire—shamefully retreating—almost without a blow," rejoined Bonnivet, who was near him.

"Ha, dastards! ha, traitors! do they desert me thus!" cried the king, furiously. "Come with me, Bonnivet."

And spurring his steed, he dashed after the flying Swiss, striving to rally them, but his efforts were in vain.

At the same juncture, the Duke d'Alençon, alarmed by the destruction of the Black Bands, the

rout of the right wing, and the disorder of the main body, sounded a retreat, and withdrew ingloriously from the field.

Vainly did La Roche du Maine, his lieutenant, and the Baron de Trans, try to turn him from his fatal resolution. Finding him immovable, they threw themselves into the main body, towards which the efforts of the enemy were now directed.

Once more the lion-hearted king made a tremendous charge against the Spanish cavalry, led on by Pescara. For a moment it seemed as if this charge would turn the tide of victory, so great was the havoc it occasioned. Pescara himself was wounded by a sword-cut in the cheek, stricken from his steed, and trampled under foot by the enemy. With difficulty he was rescued by his men, and dragged out of the way. Lannoy again brought on his Neapolitans, and was repulsed with heavy loss.

The battle now raged furiously, and the din of

arms was as if a thousand smiths were at work, mingled with the rattle of arquebusses, the shrieks of wounded horses, and the shouts, curses, and groans of the combatants. Terrible was the carnage. On all sides could be seen the bravest and noblest of the French chivalry flocking towards the king's standard, resolved to win the day or perish with him, for his actions showed that he would never retire.

But the decisive moment had come. Pescara was down, and severely wounded, as we have seen, and his squadron shattered by the last charge of the king. Lannoy, who had advanced to sustain him, was likewise repulsed. For a brief space the heroic king persuaded himself that he could retrieve his losses, but his exultation was speedily quelled. He saw a dense dark mass gathering in front that threatened to overwhelm him.

Bourbon was there with his lanz-knechts, his German reiters, and his Burgundian lances. At

his right and left wing were Von Frundsberg and Sittich. Fierce and terrible was the joy that lighted up the duke's haughty features at that moment. He saw the king, who had so deeply wronged him. He saw him surrounded with his peerless knights and nobles. Chaumont was there, the Marshal de Foix, Lambesc, Lavedan, the Grand Master of France, and a hundred other noble knights. There also was the hated Bonnivet. He could crush them all.

After gazing at them as the eagle gazes ere swooping upon its prey, Bourbon gave word to charge. The trumpets sounded, and the Burgundian lances and German reiters dashed on, shouting loudly, "Vive Bourbon!"

Clearing the ground between them and the foe, they burst like a thunder-cloud upon the French men-at-arms and knights. Tremendous was the splintering of lances—loud the rattle of musketry—sharp the clash of swords. But the squadron

gathered round the king was broken in six places, and could not rally. In the terrific mêlée that ensued, half the gallant knights whom Bourbon had seen were slain. Chaumont was transfixed in the charge—Lavedan cut down—the Grand Master buried beneath a heap of dead.

Vainly the king and those near him essayed to rally the men. They were panic-stricken, and could not be got together again.

If the strife was not yet over, the victory was won, and the decisive blow had been given by Bourbon.

XI.

HOW BONNIVET WAS SLAIN BY BOURBON.

THE lanz-knechts and Burgundians were now wholly occupied in making prisoners and slaughtering the foe. Heaps of slain lay thick on all sides, the plain was deluged in blood, and the knights rode over the dead and dying.

It was at this terrible crisis that the king's eye, ranging over the field, caught Bonnivet, who instantly rode up to him.

"What orders, sire?" he demanded.

"Hence!" cried François. "Quit my sight for ever. This is your work."

"Sire," rejoined Bonnivet, "if I have done wrong it has been unwittingly. Let me die by your side."

"No, I will not have you near me," cried François. "Away, false traitor, away!"

"Sire, by Heaven I am no traitor!" rejoined Bonnivet. "But I will not long survive your displeasure."

And, without a word more, he dashed into the thick of the enemy.

He had not been gone more than a minute, when the Marshal de Foix rode up, his left arm shattered, his armour sullied, and his steed covered with gore. From his ghastly looks it was evident he was mortally wounded, but he had still strength enough to sit his horse.

"Where is Bonnivet, sire?" he demanded. "I thought I saw him with you."

"He is gone," rejoined the king. "What would you with him?"

"Slay him—slay him with this sword dyed in the blood of our enemies," rejoined De Foix. "It is he who has brought this dire calamity on France. But for him this disastrous battle would not have been fought. If I can slay him, I shall die content. Where is he, sire? Show him to me."

"Ride from the battle while you can, and seek a surgeon—'twere best," said the king.

"No, I will first slay Bonnivet," rejoined De Foix.

"Then seek him yonder," said the king, pointing to the thickest part of the strife.

And while De Foix rode off, he himself renewed the combat. Scarcely knowing whither he was going, De Foix was quickly surrounded by several Burgundian lances, when he found himself confronted by a knight in black armour.

"Yield you, De Foix?" said this knight. And, raising his visor, he disclosed the features of Bourbon.

"I yield," replied the other. "But you had better let your men finish me. There is not an hour's life in me."

"Nay, I trust you are not so badly hurt as that," said Bourbon. "Let him be taken at once to Pavia and carefully tended. Captain Castaldo, I give him in your charge."

"Bourbon," said De Foix, "I will forgive you all the wrong you have done to France, if you will slay Bonnivet."

"'Tis he I seek," rejoined Bourbon. "Is he with the king?"

"No," replied De Foix. "He has gone in that direction," pointing to another part of the field.

"Then I will find him, if he be not slain," said Bourbon. "Heaven grant he may be reserved for my hand!"

And, renewing his orders to Castaldo, he rode off.

Casting his eyes round the field of battle, and

glancing at the numerous groups of combatants, he discerned a French noble engaged in a conflict with three or four lanz-knechts. From the richness of his armour he knew it to be Bonnivet, and spurred towards him. Before he came up the Admiral had slain one of his assailants, and put the others to flight, and was about to ride off. When Bourbon called out to him, he immediately wheeled round.

"At last I have found you," cried the duke, with a fierce laugh. "You cannot escape me now."

"What! is it Bourbon?" cried Bonnivet, glancing at him.

"Ay," replied the other. "Your mortal enemy. Back on your lives!" he added to the Burgundian lances. "I must settle this matter alone. You see that the victory is won," he added to Bonnivet, "and you know what that means. François has lost the Milanese, and will lose his kingdom."

"France will never be yours, vile traitor and rebel," cried Bonnivet, in an access of rage. "You shall never boast of your triumph over the king. I will avenge him!"

And animated with the deadliest fury of hate, he attacked Bourbon.

The conflict was terrible, but brief. By a tremendous downward blow Bourbon struck his adversary's weapon from his grasp, and then, seizing his arm, thrust the point of his sword into his throat above the gorget.

Bonnivet fell to the ground at the feet of the victor. As Bourbon gazed at his noble lineaments, now disfigured and sullied with gore, a slight sentiment of compassion touched his breast.

"Alas! unhappy man," he exclaimed. "Your destiny was fatal—fatal to France and to me."

And he rode back towards the scene of strife and slaughter.

XII.

HOW THE KING SURRENDERED TO THE VICEROY OF NAPLES.

ALL the king's bravest nobles were now gone—slain or made prisoners. Already have we particularised the slain. Among the captives were the valiant Montmorency, Saint Pol, De Lorges, Laval, Ambricourt, Fleuranges, and many other illustrious personages. François alone confronted the enemy. He was wounded in three places, and his armour was hacked with many blows and stained with blood. But his prodigious strength seemed undiminished—nay, the very rage by

which he was excited lent force to his arm. His blows were delivered with such fury and rapidity that his assailants seemed to fall around him on all sides.

After sustaining this conflict for some time, finding his foes pressing around him he cut his way through them, and pushed his steed towards a bridge over the little river Vernacula. But ere he could reach it a shot from an arquebuss pierced the brain of his charger, and the noble animal, who had borne him so well, and who, like his master, was wounded in several places, fell to the ground.

The king's assailants now made certain of capturing him alive. They were led on by a Spanish captain, Diego Avila, and Giovanni d'Urbieta, an Italian, neither of whom, however, recognised François, owing to a gash in his face, but they knew from the richness of his armour that he was a personage of the highest rank, and hoped to obtain a large ransom. Thus they now shouted

loudly to him to yield, but he replied by striking at them with his sword, and as soon as he could liberate himself from his charger he renewed the attack, killing and slaying several more of his foes, among whom were Avila and Urbieta.

But almost superhuman as was his force, it was impossible that he could long sustain himself against such tremendous odds. His enemies were closing around him, heavy blows were ringing against his armour, when Pomperant, who was riding near, caught sight of his towering figure amid the throng, and seeing the peril in which he stood, forced his way through the band of soldiers, shouting in a loud voice, "Hold! on your lives! It is the king!"

"The king!" exclaimed the soldiers, falling back at the announcement.

Most opportune was the rescue. In another minute François, who disdained to save his life by proclaiming himself, would have been laid low.

Taking advantage of the pause, Pomperant flung himself from his steed, and prostrating himself before the king, who, with his reeking sword in hand, fiercely confronted his assailants.

"Sire," cried Pomperant, in the most earnest tones he could command, "I conjure you not to struggle against fate. The battle is utterly lost, and all your valour can only end in your own destruction."

"I do not desire to survive this fatal day," rejoined the king, fiercely. "I will not yield. If you would boast that you have slain the King of France, draw your sword and attack me."

"No, sire. I will never lift my arm against your person," said Pomperant, respectfully. "But since you have done all that valour can achieve —since you have fought as monarch of France never fought before—since further resistance is in vain, let me implore you to yield to my master, the Duke de Bourbon."

"Yield to Bourbon! Yield to that rebel and traitor!—never!" exclaimed the king, furiously. "Wert thou not kneeling before me, villain, I would strike thee dead for daring to make the proposition to me. If I surrender to any one, it shall be to the Marquis of Pescara. He is a valiant captain, and loyal to his sovereign."

"Pescara is wounded, sire, and unable to protect you," rejoined Pomperant. "But the Viceroy of Naples is at hand."

"Let him come to me, then," said François.

Some soldiers were instantly despatched on this errand by Pomperant, who remained standing near the king to protect him. Though smarting from his wounds, François refused all assistance; but feeling faint from loss of blood, he sat down upon the breathless body of his charger, and took off his helmet.

"Fill this with water for me," he said, giving the casque to a soldier. "I am sore athirst."

The man hurried to the river, filled the helmet, and brought it to him. François drank eagerly, and breaking off an ornament, bestowed it upon the soldier.

At this moment Lannoy rode up, and, dismounting, knelt before the king, who had risen at his approach, and now assumed a dignified and majestic demeanour. When he spoke, his accents were firm, but full of sadness.

"Here is my sword," he said, delivering the blood-stained weapon to the Viceroy. "I yield myself prisoner to the Emperor your master. I might have saved myself by flight, but I would have died rather than quit the field dishonourably."

"Your majesty has held out to the latest moment," rejoined Lannoy. "Scarce one of your soldiers but has thrown down his arms. Doubt not that you will be worthily treated by the Emperor."

Lannoy then kissed the hand graciously ex-

tended towards him, and drawing his own sword presented it to the king.

"I will take the weapon, though I cannot use it," said François.

"Your wounds must be tended without delay, sire," said the Viceroy. "You shall be transported at once to Pavia, where skilful chirurgeons can be obtained."

"No, not to Pavia," said François, uneasily. "The inhabitants of that miserable city hate me, and with good reason, for I have shown them scant pity. Let me be taken to the Certosa, where my wounds can be dressed by the monks. They have good chirurgeons among them."

"Your majesty's wishes shall be obeyed," said Lannoy.

A litter was then made with crossed halberds, covered by a cloak, on which the wounded king was placed, and in this manner he was borne on the shoulders of the lanz-knechts towards the Certosa.

On the way thither, many frightful scenes met his gaze. De Leyva and a squadron of cavalry, infuriated against the French, were careering over the battle-field, putting to death all who had survived the fight. Hundreds were thus massacred in this way—hundreds of others, flying for their lives, plunged into the Ticino, and being unable to swim across the rapid stream, were drowned. The shouts of the victors and the cries of the vanquished rang in the monarch's ear, and filled his breast with anguish.

At one time the progress of the bearers was arrested by a pile of slain, and the soldiers were obliged to turn aside to avoid the obstruction. François remarked that the heap of bodies was caused by the destruction of the Black Bands, and he involuntarily exclaimed, "Ah! if all my soldiers had fought like those brave men, the day would not have gone against me."

Other interruptions of a like nature occurred. Dead and dying were strewed so thickly on the

ground that it was impossible to avoid them. It was utterly impossible, also, to shut the ears to the dismal sounds that smote them.

Presently the king was taken past a spot where the dead lay thickest, and here it was evident, from the rich accoutrements of the slain, that the flower of his young nobility had fallen while fighting so valiantly in his defence. The spoilers were already at work stripping them of their valuables. It was a sad sight to François, and lacerated his heart so severely, that he wished he were lying amongst them.

As he averted his gaze from this painful spectacle, his eye alighted upon a knight accoutred in black armour, who had just ridden up. As this warrior had his visor down, François could not distinguish his features.

"Halt!" exclaimed the knight, authoritatively. And the soldiers immediately obeyed.

The knight then raised his beaver, and disclosed the dark lineaments of Bourbon, now flushed with triumph.

"Ha! by Saint Denis! I felt that a traitor was nigh!" exclaimed the wounded king, raising himself, and gazing fiercely at the other. "Are you come to insult me?"

"No, sire," replied Bourbon. "I have no such design. This is not the moment, when we have changed positions, that I would exult in your defeat. Were it possible, I would soothe the bitterness of your feelings."

"You would soothe them by telling me I have lost my kingdom," cried François, fiercely. "You would soothe them by reminding me that I am a captive. You would soothe them by pointing out all those valiant nobles and captains who have died for me. You would soothe them by telling me how many you yourself have slain. Whose blood dyes your sword?"

"The blood of one who has brought all these misfortunes upon you, sire," rejoined Bourbon.

"You would have me understand that Bonnivet has died by your hand? ha!" demanded François.

"Even so, sire," rejoined Bourbon. "His guilty soul has just gone to its account. In avenging my own wrongs upon his head, I have avenged you."

"He has much to answer for," exclaimed the king. "But Heaven forgive him, even as I forgive him."

"I will not trouble you with my presence further, sire," said Bourbon. "I have only intruded upon you now to give you the assurance that we shall never forget what is due to your exalted rank, and that our victory will be used with moderation and generosity."

"What generosity can I expect from the Emperor, or from you?" cried François, bitterly. "Answer me one question ere you go. How many men have you lost in the battle?"

"Our total losses, as far as we can estimate them, are under seven hundred men, sire," replied Bourbon.

"And mine! how many have I lost?" demanded

the king. "Fear not to speak," he added, seeing Bourbon hesitate; "I would know the exact truth."

"Sire," replied Bourbon, in a sombre tone, "it is impossible to compute your losses at this moment, but I shall not overstate them in saying that eight thousand of your soldiers have fallen upon this plain. Twenty of your proudest nobles are lying within a few paces of us."

Groaning as if his heart would burst, François sank backwards.

Bourbon signed to the soldiers to proceed with their burden, and then rode off with his Burgundian lances.

François did not again unclose his eyes, and scarcely, indeed, manifested any signs of consciousness, until he was taken into the court of the Certosa.

When he was there set down, the prior with the principal monks came forth to meet him, and

would have conveyed him to the interior of the convent, but François refused to have his wounds dressed till he had prayed to Heaven, and desired the prior to conduct him at once to the church.

His injunctions were complied with, and the prior gave him his arm, for he could not walk without assistance. On entering the magnificent fabric, he was taken to the nearest chapel, and ere he knelt down his eye fell upon this inscription on the wall:

BONUM MIHI QUIA HUMILIASTI ME, UT DISCAM JUSTIFICATIONES TUAS.

The unfortunate king could not fail to apply these words to his own situation. Profoundly touched, he humbled himself before Heaven, acknowledging his manifold and great offences, and imploring forgiveness.

His devotions ended, he was taken to the principal chamber of the monastery, where his wounds were carefully dressed.

For three days he remained at the Certosa, the monastery being strictly guarded by the Spanish soldiery, and during his detention there he was visited by the Viceroy of Naples, the Marquis del Vasto, and Pescara, who had only partially recovered from the wounds he had received in the battle.

The king was then removed to the fortress of Pizzighettone, under the charge of the vigilant Captain Alarcon, with a guard of two hundred cavalry and twelve hundred fantassins, there to be kept a close prisoner till the Emperor's pleasure concerning him could be ascertained.

Before his departure from the Certosa, François announced his defeat to his mother in these memorable words:

"Madame, tout est perdu, fors l'honneur."

End of the Fifth Book.

BOOK VI.

CHARLES V.

I.

HOW FRANÇOIS I. WAS TAKEN TO MADRID, AND CONFINED IN A MOORISH CASTLE.

HAD the Duke de Bourbon been able to follow up the great and decisive victory won at Pavia by an immediate invasion of France, he must inevitably have become master of the destinies of that kingdom.

His march to Paris could scarcely have been opposed. The king was a captive—many of his best leaders were slain—others were prisoners—the flower of the French chivalry was destroyed—the

gendarmerie annihilated. All that was needed was an army. But this Bourbon could not obtain.

At no previous time was the Imperial army less under the control of its leaders than after the battle of Pavia. Though enriched by the immense booty they had acquired, the insatiate Spaniards absolutely refused to proceed upon any fresh campaign until they received their arrears of pay; while the German lanz-knechts and reiters, fully satisfied with their share of the plunder, disbanded, and returned to their own country.

Thus Bourbon was again prevented from reaping the fruits of his victory. The crown of France was within reach, if he could have grasped it. But this was impossible without an army. He had counted upon the aid of Von Frundsberg, but that bold commander, though devoted to him, and ready to accompany him, could not keep together his men, who were determined to place their plunder in the care of their families.

Time was thus given to the Duchess d'Angoulême, Regent of France, who displayed extraordinary courage and activity in the emergency, to prepare for the defence of the kingdom by levying fresh forces in Switzerland, by entering into an alliance with England, and by negotiating with the different Italian states.

Immediately after the battle of Pavia the whole of the Milanese was evacuated by the French troops, who made their way across the Alps with the utmost expedition, and the different cities were at once taken possession of by the Imperialists. Francesco Sforza returned to Milan, and ostensibly resumed his former sway, but being now little better than a vassal of the Emperor, he exercised no real authority in the duchy. Hence he naturally became anxious to throw off the yoke imposed upon him, and entered into a league with the rest of the Italian states for protection against their common enemy.

Meanwhile François I. had been detained a close prisoner within the fortress of Pizzighettone, strictly guarded by the harsh and incorruptible Alarcon. But as it was not unlikely that rescue might be attempted, or that the illustrious captive, though ever so carefully watched, might contrive to effect his escape, it was judged prudent to remove him to Spain, and he was accordingly conducted to Madrid by Alarcon and Lannoy—contrary to the wishes of Bourbon, who desired to keep him in Italy.

On his arrival at Madrid, the unfortunate king was placed in an old Moorish castle, and treated with unbecoming severity. Charles V. refused to see him, hoping that the tediousness of captivity would make him yield to the hard conditions he had proposed to him.

Bourbon followed the royal prisoner to Madrid, and was received with the greatest distinction by the Emperor, but neither his brilliant achievements

nor his princely rank could reconcile the haughty Castilian nobles to his presence at the court. They regarded him as a rebel and a traitor, and could scarcely refrain from manifesting their scorn and aversion. He came attended by a large retinue, and as the Emperor did not desire to assign him apartments in the royal palace, he begged the Marquis de Villena to lend him his mansion—one of the largest and most magnificent in Madrid.

"Sire," replied the proud marquis, "I can refuse you nothing. But I declare that as soon as the Duke de Bourbon has quitted my house I will burn it to the ground as a place infected with treason, and unworthy to be inhabited by men of honour."

"As you please, my lord," said Charles V., smiling sternly. "But as I have instigated the duke to his treason, I must share the reproach, and since you will not lend him your house, I must perforce lodge him in the Alcazar."

Bourbon expected that the treaty for the liberation of the captive monarch would be speedily concluded, but such was not the Emperor's policy. Months elapsed, and François still languished in confinement. On one point only the Emperor relaxed his severity. He permitted the Duchess d'Alençon to enter Spain, and soothe her royal brother in his captivity.

Marguerite de Valois was now a widow, the Duke d'Alençon having died shortly after his ignominious flight from the battle of Pavia, and it was the hope of the intriguing Duchess d'Angoulême that the charms of her daughter might captivate the Emperor, who was still unmarried. The death of Queen Claude, which occurred immediately after his departure for Italy, had likewise set François I. free, and he intimated his willingness to espouse the Emperor's sister, Leanor of Austria; the princess, it will be remembered, who had already been promised to the Duke de Bour-

bon. To this alliance Charles V. was favourably inclined—he had long since manifested his disinclination to fulfil his promise to Bourbon—but he had not yet given his assent to the proposal. In fact, he intended that the marriage between François I. and Leanor should form one of the conditions of the king's liberation.

To the charms of the lovely Marguerite de Valois, who produced a great effect at the court of Madrid, and enchanted the grandees by her beauty and accomplishments, the Emperor was insensible, his choice being already fixed upon the fair Isabella of Portugal—a princess to whom he was subsequently united.

At this time Charles V., whose power and successes alarmed all the sovereigns of Europe, was still in the prime of early manhood, not having completed his twenty-fifth year, but the gravity of his deportment and the sternness of his aspect made him look much older. Young as he was,

however, he had already crowded the events of a long life into his term of existence, and had all the sagacity, prudence, and caution which years alone are generally supposed to confer. His mode of life offered a perfect contrast to that of François I. Little addicted to pleasure, he devoted himself laboriously to affairs of state. Bigoted in religion, he was ever ready to manifest his zeal for the Catholic Church by the persecution of heresy. In manner he was serious and reserved—in disposition obstinate and inflexible. He was a profound hypocrite, as was exemplified by his conduct after the battle of Pavia, when he feigned the greatest humility, and forbade any public demonstrations of joy at so important a victory. "It seems," says Voltaire, "that at this juncture he was wanting to his fortune. Instead of entering France, and profiting by the victory gained by his generals in Italy, he remained inactive in Spain." But he could not follow up his success. Lacking the means of carry-

ing on the war, he resolved to impose the hardest conditions possible upon his royal captive, and extort a heavy ransom from him. With this view, the unfortunate king was treated with the unjustifiable severity we have described.

A more remarkable countenance than that of Charles V. has seldom been seen. At the period in question, his physiognomy had not acquired the sternness, almost grimness, which characterised it in later life, but even then it was cold and severe. His eyes were grey, searching in expression, and seemed to read the thoughts of those he gazed upon. His brow was lofty, and indeed the upper part of his face was extremely handsome. The nose was well formed, though not set quite straight, but the main defect of the countenance was the chin, the lower jaw protruding so much beyond the upper that the teeth could not meet properly. Notwithstanding this drawback, which was transmitted to all his descendants, and formed a characteristic

of the House of Austria, his face was cast in a noble mould, and power, inflexibility, and wisdom could be read in every lineament.

In stature Charles V. was not above the middle height, but his port was erect and stately. His limbs were strong and well proportioned, and if his movements lacked lightness and grace, they were never deficient in majesty.

Nearly a year had elapsed since the unfortunate François had been brought to Madrid, and he was still kept a close prisoner in the Moorish castle, when one morning the Duke de Bourbon solicited an audience of the Emperor, which was immediately granted. Charles V. was in his cabinet at the time, and with him were the Viceroy of Naples and his chancellor, Gattinara.

The Emperor was attired, as usual, in habiliments of a sombre hue. His doublet and hose were of black taffety. His black damask mantle was trimmed with sable, and embroidered with the

cross of Santiago. Over his shoulders he wore the collar of the Toison d'Or, and his black velvet cap was simply ornamented with a golden chain.

To the Emperor's surprise Bourbon was accompanied by the Duchess d'Alençon, and a look of displeasure crossed the monarch's brow on beholding her. From his manner he appeared disinclined to receive her.

"Sire," said Bourbon, approaching him, "I beseech you not to dismiss the duchess unheard." Then lowering his voice, he added, "I have it on the physician's authority that the king's life is in imminent danger. He cannot survive many days unless he is allowed more freedom. If he dies, your majesty will lose your ransom."

The Emperor appeared much struck with what was said, and he inquired somewhat anxiously, "Have you seen him?"

"No, sire," replied Bourbon, "but I have conversed with the physician. I pray you listen to

the Duchess d'Alençon. Approach, madame," he added to her, "his majesty will hear you."

Thus invited, the beautiful princess, whose countenance bespoke her affliction, came forward and threw herself at the Emperor's feet. Charles endeavoured to raise her, but she would not move from her suppliant posture till she had spoken.

"Sire," she said, in accents well calculated to move the Emperor, "if your majesty has any compassion for your unfortunate prisoner you will see him without delay. You alone have power to cure his malady, which is caused by grief, and aggravated by mental irritation. That he cannot long survive if he continues in this state is quite certain, for his disease is beyond the reach of medicine. His physicians can do no more for him, and leave him to your majesty. If you abandon him, he will die, and then you will have a perpetual reproach upon your conscience. Save him, sire!—save him, while there is yet time!"

"Rest easy, madame, I will save him," said the Emperor, raising her. "I had no idea it had come to such a pass with your royal brother. I would not have him die for all my dominions. Haste and tell him so, madame. I will come to him speedily."

"The message will give him new life, sire," rejoined Marguerite. "I will prepare him for the visit."

And with a grateful obeisance to the Emperor she retired, and, quitting the palace, hastened to the old Moorish castle in which François was confined.

As soon as the duchess was gone, Gattinara said to the Emperor, "Sire, permit me to observe, that if you visit the king at this juncture, you must grant him his liberty unconditionally. Otherwise, your visit will be attributed to unworthy motives."

"Would you have the king die, as he infal-

libly will do, unless his Imperial Majesty sees him?" cried Bourbon.

"I have deemed it my duty to point out to his majesty the construction that will be put upon his visit," rejoined Gattinara, gravely.

"The solid advantages of the victory are not to be sacrificed to an over-strained sense of honour," remarked Lannoy. "If the king dies, all will be lost."

"Humanity dictates the course to be pursued," said Bourbon. "To refuse to see the king would be to condemn him to death."

"By Santiago! I *will* see him," said the Emperor; "and, what is more, I will conclude the treaty with him. Bring it with you, Gattinara. Now to the prison."

II.

HOW THE TREATY OF MADRID WAS SIGNED.

WHEN Marguerite was admitted by the guard into the chamber in which her royal brother was confined, he was alone, and stretched upon a couch.

"I have good tidings for your majesty," she cried, flying towards him, and taking his hand. "The Emperor is coming to see you."

"It is too late," said François. "He can do me no good now. I have lost all hope. Look here," he added, taking a paper from beneath

the cushion on which he was reclining, "this is an act by which I renounce the crown of France, and place it in the hands of the Dauphin, exhorting my family and my people to regard me as dead—and most likely I shall be dead ere this act can be delivered to my son."

"I shall not need to take it," she rejoined. "I am persuaded you will now be able to make terms with the Emperor."

"I will rather die than submit to his conditions," rejoined the king.

"Hear me, François," she said, "and do not think the course I am about to suggest unworthy of you. You must be delivered from this prison at any price."

"Not at the price of my honour, Marguerite," he cried. "You cannot counsel that?"

"You must dissemble with the tyrant, brother," she rejoined. "You must beat him with his own weapons. A treaty signed in prison cannot be

binding on you. The circumstances render it invalid. Promise all the Emperor asks—but perform only what is reasonable and just."

"I must perform all I promise," said François.

"No," she rejoined. "You are justified in deceiving a pitiless conqueror who abuses his position. France will absolve you."

At this moment, the door was thrown open and gave admittance to the Emperor, who was attended by Bourbon, Lannoy, and Gattinara.

Charles V. paused near the door to look at his prisoner, and was sensibly touched by his altered appearance.

"Can this be the magnificent François de Valois?" he muttered to Bourbon. "Mother of Heaven! how he is changed!"

"Sadly changed, indeed, sire," rejoined Bourbon. "Even I can pity him."

On beholding the Emperor, François raised him-

self with his sister's support, and said, in accents of mingled bitterness and reproach,

"Your majesty has come to see your prisoner die."

"No, I have come to bid you live," rejoined Charles V., hastening towards him. "You are no longer my prisoner, but my friend and brother. From this moment you are free."

As these gracious words were uttered, François withdrew from his sister, and flung his arms round the Emperor's neck. On recovering from his emotion, he said,

"I thank your majesty from the bottom of my heart for your goodness towards me. You have performed a magical cure. In giving me freedom you have instantly restored me to health and strength."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, my good brother," rejoined Charles V. "I should never have forgiven myself if aught had befallen you. You shall be

liberated this very day—that is, as soon as we have arranged the terms of the treaty," he hastened to add. "That is a necessary preliminary step, as you know."

"Of course, sire," rejoined the king. "We can settle the treaty now. I am well enough to attend to it."

And, assisted by the Emperor and Marguerite, he rose from the couch, and seated himself near the table, on which writing materials were placed.

"You have indeed recovered in a marvellous manner, my good brother," remarked Charles V., smiling.

"It is all your doing, sire," rejoined François. "But let us proceed to business. I repeat, I am quite equal to it."

"'Twill be best that the matter should be concluded at once, brother," said Charles V., seating himself opposite the king. "The treaty has already

been drawn out by the grand-chancellor, and shall be read to you."

"The treaty drawn out!" exclaimed François, frowning. "Then we cannot discuss the terms."

"If we discuss the terms it may prolong your captivity, brother," rejoined Charles V.

"Agree," whispered Marguerite, who was standing near the king.

"Well, let me hear the conditions," said François to Gattinara, who had unfolded a large parchment, and was preparing to read it. "Give the substance of the treaty, my lord. I care not for the formalities."

"By this treaty, sire," said Gattinara, "you will cede to his Imperial Majesty all your pretensions to the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, Genoa, and Asti—in a word, all your rights in Italy."

He then paused for a moment, but as François made no observation, he went on:

"You will also cede the duchy of Burgundy to his Imperial Majesty——"

"It should be 'restore,' rather than 'cede,'" interrupted Charles V., "since the duchy was the patrimony of my ancestress, Mary of Burgundy. But proceed."

"Your majesty will cede the duchy of Burgundy," continued the chancellor, "the countship of Charolois, the signories of Noyers and of Château-Chinon, the viscounty of Auxonne, and the jurisdiction of Saint-Laurent."

François uttered an exclamation of impatience, but was restrained by his sister, who grasped his hand.

"A moment's patience, brother," remarked Charles V. "We will speak of Burgundy anon."

"Your majesty shall remove your protection from Henri d'Albret, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia, but who has since escaped, and prevail upon him to renounce the title of King of Navarre."

"Pâques Dieu! I cannot do this," cried François.

"Let the chancellor go on, brother," said the Emperor.

"Your majesty shall likewise remove your protection from the Duke of Gueldres," pursued Gattinara, "the Duke of Würtemberg, and Robert de la Marck."

"By Saint Louis! I will not thus sacrifice my friends and allies!" cried François.

"Hear him out, brother!—hear him out!" said the Emperor.

Gattinara paused for a moment, and then resumed. Aware of what was coming, Bourbon watched the king narrowly.

"Your majesty shall restore to the Duke de Bourbon all the lands, fiefs, and signories of which he has been deprived, and shall add to them Provence and Dauphiné. These states shall be erected into a kingdom to be possessed by the Duke de Bourbon, without tenure from the crown of France."

"Never!" exclaimed François, rising. "I will remain in thraldom all my days rather than consent to this indignity. I agree to restore Bourbon's possessions, and will indemnify him for all his losses, but I will not dismember France in order to create a kingdom for him. Even if I were disposed to yield, the laws of the State are opposed to any such alienation, and would prevent it."

"I will take my chance of that," remarked Bourbon, sternly. "What has been gained by the sword can be maintained by the sword. The condition must be subscribed."

"The king agrees," said Marguerite, as François, by her persuasion, sat down again.

At a sign from the Emperor, Gattinara went on.

"Your majesty shall re-establish the Seigneur de Pomperant, and all the other partisans of the Duke de Bourbon, in their possessions. And you shall release the Prince of Orange, who has been confined in the castle of Lusignan, and deprived

of his possessions for his zeal towards the Emperor."

"To the latter condition I unhesitatingly agree," said François.

"Lastly," said Gattinara, "your majesty shall pay to the King of England five hundred thousand crowns, and to his Imperial Majesty as a ransom two millions."

"These are onerous conditions, sire," said François, as the chancellor concluded.

"They appear hard now, but you will not think them so when you are at liberty, brother," said the Emperor.

"Neither will you be bound by them," whispered Marguerite. "The violence offered releases you from all engagements."

"His majesty must pledge his royal word to return to prison, if all the conditions of the treaty be not fulfilled within three months," said Lannoy.

"How say you, brother? Will you give that pledge?" demanded Charles V.

"He will—he does!" interposed Marguerite.

"Nay, madame, let the king speak for himself," said the Emperor.

"I give the required pledge," said François, with evident reluctance.

"But your majesty must also give hostages for your good faith," remarked Bourbon.

"Hostages!" exclaimed François.

"Yes, sire, hostages—hostages the most precious to yourself and to your people—your two elder sons. They must take your place, and remain in captivity till all be fulfilled."

"Sire, you do not require this?" cried François.

"If you mean fairly, brother—as I feel sure you do—where is the hardship?" rejoined Charles V. "I must have an exchange of prisoners."

"Assent," whispered Marguerite. "We will soon find means to liberate the princes."

"Well, sire, I must perforce agree," said François.

"One point only remains," said the Emperor.

"I would willingly have kept it separate, but circumstances require that it should form part of the treaty. It relates to my sister Leanor, the widowed queen of Portugal."

"Yes, sire, and I now renew the proposal I have made to you respecting the queen," said François. "Do you agree to give me her hand?"

"Sire," interposed Bourbon, haughtily, "you have already promised your sister to me."

"Before giving that promise I ought to have consulted her," said Charles.

"You would have me to understand that she declines the alliance," said Bourbon.

"The queen could scarce hesitate between a proscribed prince and a powerful monarch," said Marguerite, in a tone that stung Bourbon to the quick.

"You mistake, madame," he cried, sharply. "'Tis the prince who is powerful, and the king a prisoner. However, I relinquish my claim.

Your Imperial Majesty is free to bestow the queen your sister on whomsoever you list."

"Then, brother, she is yours," said the Emperor to François; "and I may now tell you frankly that your chivalrous qualities have won her admiration, and that she can give you her heart as well as her hand. The alliance, I trust, will form a lasting bond of amity between us. By the terms of the treaty you are bound to cede Burgundy to me. I am willing that you should settle the duchy upon my sister, to revert to me in default of issue by the marriage."

"Sire, I am content," said François.

"Since we are fully agreed, let the treaty be signed," said Charles V.

The document was then laid on the table, and being duly signed and sealed by the two monarchs, was delivered to the custody of the grand-chancellor.

The Emperor then signified his desire to be left

alone with the King of France, and the others withdrew.

"I have a few words to say to you, brother," said Charles V., drawing near the king. "You are now free—perfectly free. Up to this moment we have treated together as princes, let us now deal as loyal gentlemen. You are esteemed, and with reason, the model of chivalry. Tell me, with the frankness of a preux chevalier, who has never broken his word, that you mean to perform the compact you have made with me."

And he fixed a searching look upon the king as he spoke.

"Sire," replied François, pointing to a crucifix fixed against the wall beside them, "I swear on that cross to deal loyally with you."

"Then if you fail, I may say you have forfeited your word?" said the Emperor, still fastening his keen grey eyes upon him.

"You may, sire. But rest easy. Foi de gentilhomme! I shall *not* fail."

Perfectly satisfied by these assurances, Charles V. caused the doors of the castle to be thrown open, and conducted his somewhile prisoner to the royal palace, where apartments suitable to his rank were assigned him.

A few days afterwards, François was affianced to Leanor of Portugal, and as soon as he was able to travel, he proceeded with a strong guard, under the charge of Lannoy and Alarcon, towards Fontarabia.

In the centre of the river Bidassoa, which divides France and Spain, a bark was moored, and in this little vessel the exchange between the king and his two sons took place.

François tenderly embraced his sons, and, bidding them farewell, caused himself to be rowed to the opposite bank, exclaiming joyfully, as he leaped ashore,

"Once more, I am king."

Mounting a swift charger, he speeded towards Bayonne, where he found the Duchess d'Angoulême and the court awaiting him.

How he violated the conditions of the treaty of Madrid, and how he broke his plighted faith with the Emperor, it is not the purpose of this history to relate.

End of the Sixth Book.

BOOK VII.

THE SACK OF ROME.

I.

HOW VON FRUNDSBERG ONCE MORE ENTERED ITALY WITH HIS LANZ-KNECHTS.

DEEPLY mortified, Bourbon quitted Madrid immediately after the liberation of François I., and returned to Lombardy.

In order to conciliate him, Charles V. had appointed him to the supreme command of the army of Italy, and he had now no rival to thwart him, Pescara having died during his absence.

Francesco Sforza, having joined the Italian league, as previously stated, and openly declared against the Emperor, had shut himself up in the

citadel of Milan, where he was besieged by the Imperial generals. Their forces were quartered in the city, and the miserable inhabitants, having been disarmed, were completely at the mercy of the rapacious soldiers, who took what they pleased, forcing their victims by torments to give their property. The shops and magazines were gutted of their stores, and the owners not merely robbed, but ill treated.

To prevent egress from the city, the gates were strictly guarded, and many persons committed suicide by hurling themselves from the walls, in order to escape from the horrible tyranny to which they were subjected. It was while the inhabitants were in this miserable condition that Bourbon arrived at Milan to assume the command of the Imperial army.

As soon as he had taken up his quarters in the ducal palace, he was waited upon by the podesta and the magistrates, who represented to him in the

most moving terms the lamentable state of the city, and implored him to encamp the army without the walls. Bourbon appeared touched by what he heard, but he professed his inability to relieve the city from oppression, unless the means of doing so were afforded him.

"I feel your distress, and the distress of your fellow-citizens, most acutely," he said. "But I can only see one remedy for it. All the disorders on the part of the soldiery of which you complain, and which I deeply deplore, are caused by want of pay. The generals have had no money to give them, and have therefore been compelled to tolerate this dreadful licence. I am in the same predicament. Furnish me with thirty thousand ducats, so that I can offer these refractory troops a month's pay, and I will compel them to encamp without the walls of the city, and so liberate you from further persecution."

"Alas! my lord, we are in such a strait that

we cannot comply with your suggestion," said the podesta. "We have been plundered of our all."

"Make a final effort, my good friends," said Bourbon. "You must have some secret hoards kept for an extremity like the present. Do not hesitate. Without money I cannot help you."

"We despair of raising the large sum named by your highness," rejoined the podesta, dolefully. "But should we succeed, may we rely upon your promise? Pardon the doubt. We have been so often deceived."

"I, too, have been deluded by false promises, and by a monarch whose word should be sacred," rejoined Bourbon. "Bring the money without fear. If I deceive you, may I perish by the first shot fired by the enemy at the first battle in which I shall be engaged."

"Your oath is recorded in heaven, my lord!" said the podesta, solemnly. And he quitted the palace with his brother magistrates.

Two days afterwards, the money was brought and distributed by Bourbon among the soldiery, but he was unable to make good his word. The insatiable Spaniards refused to quit their quarters, and the wretched citizens, betrayed in their last hope, had no other refuge but death.

After holding out for a few weeks, at the end of which time the garrison was reduced to the last extremities, Sforza capitulated, and was allowed to retire to Como, from which city he subsequently fled to join the army of the Italian League.

Had the Emperor possessed the sinews of war, he might easily have subjugated the whole of Italy at this juncture; but as he was unable to pay his army, and allowed it to subsist by plundering the country, he could neither extend his conquests nor retain what he had won. All the cities of Lombardy were ready to throw off the yoke imposed upon them, and to rise against their oppressors. The Italian States, as we have previously men-

tioned, had leagued together for the defence of the country, and a powerful army had been raised by the Duke of Urbino, assisted by the renowned Giovanni de' Medici and other leaders, to hold Bourbon in check.

And there was good reason for apprehension. A storm was brewing, which threatened to lay waste the whole of the fair land of Italy. The restless ambition of Bourbon led him to seek for fresh conquests, and he now turned his thoughts towards the south, designing to plunder Rome and make himself King of Naples.

But the army, though devoted to him, was not sufficiently strong for the execution of his plan. While he was considering how he could increase his troops, he learnt, to his great joy, that his late companion-in-arms, Von Frundsberg, had again collected together a large force in Germany, and he immediately despatched Pomperant to acquaint that leader with his project, and to exhort him to enter Italy with all possible de-

spatch, promising him a far larger booty in the new campaign than he had gained at the battle of Pavia.

Incited by this promise, Von Frundsberg entered Italy at the head of fourteen thousand lanzknechts, and five hundred reiters contributed by the Archduke Ferdinand, under the command of Captain Zucker.

Debouching by the Val de Sabbia, devastating the country as he marched along, plundering the churches and destroying the images, Von Frundsberg at last reached Borgoforte on the Po, whither he was followed by the Duke of Urbino and Giovanni de' Medici.

A sharp engagement took place, but it was quickly decided in favour of the Germans. During a charge made at the head of his light horse by Medici, that valiant leader was struck by a shot from a falconet, and his leg being grievously shattered, he was carried off the field.

This unlucky event turned the fortune of the

day. Discouraged by the fate of their leader, Medici's cavalry were dispersed by Zucker, while the Venetian infantry retired before Von Frundsberg.

The successful issue of this conflict, the first in which they had been engaged since their irruption into Italy, greatly encouraged the marauding army. Continuing their march without further interruption from the Duke of Urbino, they skirted the right bank of the Po, ravaging the whole territory of Modena, Reggio, and Parma, preying like a cloud of locusts on that rich and fertile district, sacking and burning villages, plundering the churches, and finally halted near Piacenza, where Von Frundsberg pitched his camp to await a junction with Bourbon.

Meanwhile, the army of the Italian League had lost its best leader—the only one, indeed, capable of successfully checking the invasion. From the field of Borgoforte the gallant Giovanni de'

Medici was transported to Mantua, when it was found that his leg was so grievously injured that it was necessary to amputate the limb. The hardy young warrior held a light for the surgeons, and watched them during their task, without shrinking, or even changing countenance. But his life could not be saved by the operation.

Thus died Italy's best champion, and on whom she might have relied at her hour of need.

II.

HOW BOURBON COMMENCED HIS MARCH TO ROME.

LONG before Von Frundsberg and his barbarous hordes had reached Piacenza, Bourbon would have joined them, but he found it impossible to remove the Imperial army from Milan without giving them a modicum of the arrears of pay due to them. Already he had distributed his money and jewels among them, and had nothing more to give. In vain he endeavoured to extort fresh supplies from the miserable citizens; their resources were utterly exhausted, and the worst torments proved ineffectual.

In this dilemma, a plan of raising money occurred to him, and was at once put in execution.

Girolamo Moroni, Sforza's chancellor and private secretary, had been imprisoned in the Castle of Pavia by Pescara, and still remained a captive. Knowing that Moroni possessed great wealth, and hoping to extort a large sum from him by working on his fears, Bourbon visited him in the castle. The prisoner, who regarded Bourbon as a friend, was well pleased to see him.

"You are come to deliver me?" he said.

"I am come to deliver you from bondage, but not in the way you expect," rejoined Bourbon, sternly. "Prepare for death. You will be beheaded to-morrow morning."

"For what crime?" demanded Moroni, trembling. "What have I done?"

"You have conspired against the Emperor, and have induced Francesco Sforza to join the Italian League," rejoined Bourbon.

"But in putting me to death you will deprive yourself of a most useful agent," said the wily chancellor. "I can aid you effectually against the League."

"I care not for the League," rejoined Bourbon. "But I will save you on one condition. I know you have a large sum of money concealed——"

"I swear to your highness that you are mistaken," interrupted Moroni. "I have been despoiled of all my treasures by Pescara."

"I know better," said Bourbon. "You have a secret hoard. Pay me thirty thousand ducats, and you shall be set free. Otherwise, your head will fall on the block."

"Thirty thousand ducats! Impossible, highness! Where am I to get that sum?"

"That is best known to yourself. I will give you two days to find the money. On the morning of the third day, if it be not forthcoming, you will die."

"I pray your highness to consider that compliance with the demand is impossible."

"I make no demand," said Bourbon. "I offer your life on very easy terms."

And he quitted the cell.

As Moroni remained obstinate, in order to intimidate him still further, Bourbon caused a large scaffold to be reared in the court of the castle, in sight of the windows of his prison-chamber.

These dismal preparations were not without effect. Believing that Bourbon would really execute his threat, Moroni sent for him, and delivered him the money.

"Ha! I felt certain you could procure it," cried Bourbon, as he took the bags of gold. "This money will enable me to march to Rome."

On his return to Milan, Bourbon assembled his army, and after distributing the money among them, he thus harangued them:

"Valiant captains and brave soldiers!—The time

has now arrived when I must acquaint you with my secret intentions. Ere long, I hope to enrich you all by the sack of Rome—to deliver to you its nobles, its senators, its prelates, with all their wealth. You shall have the whole consistory of cardinals to deal with as you list—nay, Pope Clement himself, who has excommunicated us all, and who so unworthily fills the chair of Saint Peter."

This address was received with enthusiastic acclamations. The captains drew their swords, and the men brandished their halberds, or shook their arquebusses above their heads, and a universal shout arose of "To Rome!—to Rome!"

"I will not deceive you, my brave companions," pursued Bourbon, as soon as the clamour ceased. "I have nothing more to give you. I am a poor knight—poor as yourselves. But as I have told you, we shall all become rich at Rome. Let us march thither at once. The Baron von

Frundsberg and his lanz-knechts are waiting for us near Piacenza. Let us join them without delay, or they may go on and reach Rome before us."

"We are ready to march at once," cried thousand voices. "To Rome!—to Rome! Vive Bourbon!"

Bourbon did not allow their enthusiasm to cool, but put them in order of march at once, using so much expedition, that late in the following day he had effected a junction with Von Frundsberg.

When the two armies were combined, Bourbon found himself at the head of twenty-two thousand men—namely, fourteen thousand lanz-knechts brought by Frundsberg, five hundred reiters under Captain Zucker, five thousand Spaniards, two thousand Italians, and a thousand light horse.

"With such an army as this," he said to Von Frundsberg, as they rode together along the lines, "I can conquer all Italy."

III.

HOW BOURBON REACHED THE APENNINES.

In the fierce bands of which Bourbon was now the leader, Italy found a scourge such as it had not endured since it was overrun by Alaric. The Spaniards were cruel and rapacious, worse than brigands, and scarcely amenable to discipline. The Germans were equally savage, and even more undisciplined, and, being all Lutherans and inflamed with intense hatred against the Pope and the creed of Rome, believed they were serving the cause of the Reformed religion by plundering and slaugh-

tering its opponents. The Italians, who were commanded by Fabrizio Maramaldo, Sciarra Colonna, and Ludovico Gonzaga, had all the worst qualities of their Spanish and German associates, being bloodthirsty and licentious, and capable of any deed of violence or rapacity. Among the Spanish leaders who still remained with the army was the Marquis del Vasto, but since the death of his redoubted relative, Pescara, and the increased popularity of Bourbon, he exercised little authority over the troops.

Over the whole of this wild host, composed of such heterogeneous materials — Lutherans, Romanists, scoffers at all creeds—no one exercised supreme control but Bourbon. The lanz-knechts were devoted to Von Frundsberg, and the reiters to Zucker, but neither Spaniards nor Italians would have served under such leaders.* By a mixture of firmness and indulgence, which he knew so well how to practise, by his frankness and easiness of

manner, Bourbon kept the wildest and most ferocious under a certain restraint and discipline, and though he was often compelled to make a severe example of some mutinous ruffian, the army ever recognised the justice of the sentence, and upheld his authority.

That Bourbon should be content to link his fortunes with soldiers whose professed objects were plunder and violence, may appear surprising, but it must be borne in mind that his nobler impulses had been checked, if not destroyed, by the life he had lately led. Ambition still reigned within his breast, the desire of conquest still animated him strongly as ever—even more strongly, perhaps—but he no longer cared by what means, or by what instruments, he attained his end. If he could gain a crown, no matter how it was won.

Meanwhile, he had succeeded in convincing the soldiers that he had become an adventurer like themselves. As we have said, he had stripped

himself of all his money and jewels, and retained only his sword and lance, his accoutrements and his steed. Yet never had he been so powerful as now. None dared to disobey him. While idolising him, the men stood in awe of him, and the captains and generals feared him. He had become the master-spirit of the whole host, by whom all its plans and movements were directed. He was now without territory and without money, his home was the camp, his family the army. Of all his followers, the only one who accompanied him on his march to Rome was Pomperant. Like himself, Pomperant was still proscribed.

Proceeding slowly, so as not to fatigue his troops, Bourbon marched by San Donino, Parma, Reggio, and Modena towards Bologna.

He did not stop to attack any of these cities, but contented himself with ravaging the surrounding country, emptying the granaries, and stripping the monasteries and churches of their plate and

ornaments. The zealous Lutherans completed the work of destruction by demolishing the shrines and images. Abundance of provisions being brought in each day by the foraging parties, who scoured the country round, the army fared sumptuously, and Von Frundsberg caroused nightly in his tent with Zucker and the German captains.

When within a day's march of Bologna, Bourbon had a conference with Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, who, having been excluded from the Italian League by the Pope, was favourable to the invasion.

Bourbon endeavoured to prevail upon the duke to furnish him with artillery, of which he stood greatly in need. D'Este declined to supply the cannon, but made Bourbon a large subsidy, which enabled him to give two crowns to each of the lanz-knechts, being the first pay they had received since they had started on the expedition.

Having no artillery to attack Bologna, Bourbon

continued his march. His position was one of some danger. In his rear was the Duke of Urbino and the Venetian army, while in front were the Pontifical troops, commanded by the Marquis of Saluzzo. The latter, however, retired as the invaders advanced, and the Duke of Urbino, not wishing to risk an engagement, contented himself with harassing their rear.

As he pursued his march, Bourbon's army was daily augmented by hundreds of lawless adventurers, by deserters from the army of the League, and from the Pontifical army, who flocked round his standard, drawn towards it by the hope of plunder. Bourbon welcomed them all, brigands as they were, the bulk of his host being composed of similar material.

He was now approaching the Apennines, and had reached a wild and picturesque spot on the spur of the mountains, where the army, sheltered by some high rocks, had encamped for the night.

The soldiers were collected in groups around their fires, carousing, gambling, jesting, quarrelling, or making merry, as was their wont. Some of the Spanish soldiers were chanting a song, composed in their leader's honour, which commenced thus:

> Calla, calla, Julio Cesar, Hannibal y Scipion,
> Viva la fama de Bourbon!

While Bourbon was making his rounds, he heard the sentinels challenge a horseman who was riding up the hill towards the camp, and sent Pomperant to question him.

IV.

THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

THE person stopped by the sentinels was a young man of about five-and-twenty, of martial bearing and aspect. He was tall, well proportioned, and possessed handsome features, characterised by a proud, fierce expression, and Pomperant's first impression on beholding him was, that he was a Venetian officer charged with a message from the Duke of Urbino; but as he drew near, and the stranger's countenance could be more clearly distinguished, Pomperant uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure, for he

recognised in him one of the bitterest enemies of France, and one of the most devoted friends of the Duke de Bourbon, the Prince of Orange.

Young as he was, Philibert de Chalons, Prince of Orange, was one of the most distinguished captains of the day. He came of an ancient Burgundian house, and inherited all the warlike qualities of his ancestry. Of a remarkably fierce and vindictive temperament, he never forgave an injury. His animosity towards François I. originated in a slight offered him by that monarch. At the ceremonial of the baptism of the Dauphin, the Prince of Orange was one of the invited guests, and appeared at the Louvre with a retinue befitting his rank, but he was very coldly received by the king, and the apartments designed for him in the palace were given to another. Highly incensed by this treatment, he immediately returned to his castle of Nozeroi, and subsequently offered his services to the Emperor, who received him

with open arms, and compensated him by other lands for the territories of which he was deprived by the King of France.

Philibert's conduct justified the Emperor's sagacity. The young prince greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Fontarabia.

When Bourbon invaded Provence, Philibert sailed from Barcelona to join him, but being taken prisoner, as may be remembered, by Andrea Doria, he was carried to France, and imprisoned in the castle of Lusignan in Poitou, where he was detained in close captivity until after the battle of Pavia.

Imprisonment did not tame his spirit, but rather envenomed his hatred of François I. Regardless of all consequences, he perpetually launched into fierce invectives against that monarch, and covered the walls of his prison with satirical remarks upon him.

In compliance with the treaty of Madrid, the

Prince of Orange was set free, but as the convention was only executed in part, his confiscated domains were not restored to him.

Without a single follower, and almost without money, Philibert set forth to join Bourbon, and after many adventures and hindrances on his journey, which it is not necessary to recount, reached him at the foot of the Apennines, as described.

"I have come to join your highness," said the young prince, when brought before Bourbon by Pomperant. "I have nothing to offer you but my sword, but that I devote to your service."

"By Sainte Barbe! you are as welcome, prince, as if you had a thousand lances at your back," rejoined Bourbon. "You offer me your sword. I accept it with gratitude. At any time, the offer would enchant me—now, it is doubly welcome. Your distinguished name will be of infinite service, and will help to confound my enemies. Be-

fore you ask aught from me, noble prince, I will evince my satisfaction by appointing you second in command to myself of the whole army."

"I have done nothing to merit such consideration at your highness's hands," rejoined Philibert.

"But you will do much hereafter, prince," said Bourbon. "I know that in you I have a staunch partisan—a friend on whom I can rely. We have wrongs in common, and are both mortal enemies of the false and perfidious François de Valois."

"His very name rouses my choler," cried Philibert, fiercely. "May all the curses I have daily invoked upon the faithless tyrant during my captivity at Lusignan alight on his devoted head! Had I been in the Emperor's place, I would never have set him free till all the conditions of the treaty had been fulfilled. François de Valois is not to be trusted. He has broken his word with us all, and his name ought to be covered with infamy. But I beg pardon of your highness for

my warmth," he added, checking himself. "I thank you for the trust you repose in me. You shall find me a firm friend. And I hope the hour may come when we shall both be fully avenged on our common enemy."

"Be sure the hour will come," said Bourbon, sternly. "But the work of vengeance must be begun at Rome. Look around, prince. What do you behold?"

"An army of brave men—somewhat savage, perhaps, and not like the well-equipped legions of France, but able to conquer a kingdom."

"Of this robber-host François has made me leader," said Bourbon; "and he has compelled you to join it."

"No matter. I serve Bourbon," rejoined Philibert; "and I would rather serve him than any monarch in Europe. I care not of what the army is composed, so that the men can fight."

"They can fight well, prince, and pillage as well

as fight, as you will find, when you know them better," said Bourbon, laughing.

"If they serve without pay, as I suppose they do, they must plunder," said Philibert. "Despite their looks and equipments, they seem good soldiers."

"The Pope will think so if they once get within the walls of Rome," remarked Bourbon. "They are all impatience to be there, and I do not mean to balk them."

"Then you do not design to attack Florence?" inquired the Prince of Orange.

"I have no artillery," replied Bourbon, "and I do not wish to waste time in a siege. Florence will be defended by the army of the League and the Pontifical troops. Rome is more important."

While they were thus conversing, Von Frundsberg and Zucker came up, and their new leader was presented to them by Bourbon.

Philibert possessed some of the qualities of

Bourbon himself, and could put on, when he pleased, the rough frankness of a soldier. His manner pleased Von Frundsberg, and that hardy veteran was delighted with him when they became better acquainted, and had passed half the night in a carouse.

V.

HOW LANNOY VAINLY ATTEMPTED TO ARREST BOURBON'S MARCH.

NEXT day, from the heights of the Apennines, Bourbon and his bands looked down upon the lovely city of Florence, and on the incomparable valley of the Arno. When the soldiers beheld Florence in all its ravishing beauty lying before them—when from the heights on which they stood they could count all its palaces and churches, their cupidity was so strongly excited that they demanded with frenzied eagerness to be led to the assault.

"Let us sack Florence, noble general!" they shouted.

"No, my brave companions, I cannot grant your request," rejoined Bourbon. "Florence is too well defended. Mark the cannon on the walls and bastions? Mark the army encamped outside the walls, placed there to cover the city? Florence cannot be taken without artillery, and we have none. We must march on to Rome, which can be easily taken, and where ten times the wealth of Florence is collected."

Convinced by these arguments, the men ceased their solicitations, and Bourbon descending to the valley, and avoiding Florence, crossed the Upper Arno, and continued his march without molestation to Viterbo, in the neighbourhood of which city he halted.

It was during this halt that he was informed by his scouts of the approach of Lannoy with a small escort. An hour later the Viceroy of Naples

arrived, and was received by Bourbon in his tent. The Prince of Orange, Del Vasto, Von Frundsberg, Zucker, and the other leaders were present at the interview.

"I have come to forbid your highness's further advance," said Lannoy to Bourbon. "I have just concluded, on the part of the Emperor, a truce with the Pope, and have undertaken that the army shall retire."

"Your highness has undertaken more than you can perform," said Bourbon. "I need scarcely inform you that the troops are unpaid."

"Let not that concern you," rejoined Lannoy. "His Holiness has supplied me with sufficient money to pay them. The army must retire, I say. I am the representative of his Imperial Majesty in Italy, and I issue that order."

"By the beard of my father! I shall not respect it," cried Von Frundsberg. "I do not serve the Emperor!"

"Neither do we," added Zucker, Maramaldo, and the Italian leaders. "We have received no pay from him. We serve the brave Bourbon."

"But the Duke de Bourbon only derives his authority from the Emperor," said Lannoy; "and I offer you payment for your troops."

"That will not suffice," cried Von Frundsberg, fiercely. "We have not crossed the Po, and marched thus far through Italy, to retire because the Emperor at the last moment has thought fit to conclude a truce with the Pope. The truce is not binding upon us. We have nothing to do with it. As to the paltry payment offered by your highness, we scout it. No sum could induce us to turn back. We are the sworn enemies of Antichrist. We will destroy the idolatrous city. We will plunder the Vatican and Saint Peter's of their treasures."

"Is it possible your highness can tolerate this horrible impiety?" said Lannoy to Bourbon. "At

least, the Spanish soldiers will obey me. I shall take them with me to Rome for the defence of the city against this meditated attack. Bid them come with me in the Emperor's name," he added to Del Vasto.

"I fear the attempt will be vain," returned the marquis.

"Try them," said Bourbon. "If they choose to depart, I shall not hinder them."

On this, Del Vasto quitted the tent, but he had not been gone many minutes when a great disturbance was heard outside, and he returned with looks of alarm.

"You have met with ill success, I fear, my lord?" said Lannoy.

"I could scarce have met with worse," rejoined the marquis. "The soldiers utterly refuse to obey me. They will not respect the truce. They will not protect the Pope. They are determined to sack Rome. They say they know no other leader than

Bourbon. Your highness must fly. The soldiers are so infuriated against you that I fear they will do you injury."

"How should I fly?" cried Lannoy, trembling. "I put myself under your highness's protection," he added to Bourbon.

"Fear nothing," said Bourbon. "I will be answerable for your safety."

As he spoke, a number of Spanish soldiers burst into the tent, shouting out,

"Death to Lannoy! Death to the Pope's general!"

"How dare you force your way thus into my presence?" cried Bourbon, confronting them fiercely, and speaking in a stern authoritative tone. "Hence, mutinous rascals, or you shall be punished."

"Deliver up the Viceroy to us, and we will go at once," said the foremost of the band.

"Ha! dare you parley with me?" cried Bourbon. "Away, I say, at once, or——"

On this the soldiers retired, but they cast menacing glances at Lannoy as they went, and the tumult outside the tent continued.

"It would have been well if your highness had ascertained the disposition of the army before venturing among them," remarked Von Frundsberg. "They will not be balked of their plunder."

"Your highness has promised me your protection," said Lannoy, appealing to Bourbon.

"Fear nothing," replied the other. "I will see you safely out of the camp. Come with me!"

Bourbon then went forth, closely followed by Lannoy and Del Vasto. As the party appeared, the soldiers assailed the Viceroy with renewed threats, but, overawed by Bourbon's determined manner, they fell back, and allowed the escort to approach. As soon as Lannoy had mounted his steed, and was surrounded by his little band, his courage in some degree returned, and he said to the soldiers,

"Before I go, let me make a last appeal to you to return to your duty, and obey your liege lord, the Emperor."

"We have no other leader now but Bourbon," rejoined the men. "Vive Bourbon!"

"Have I no longer any authority over you?" said Del Vasto.

"None," returned the soldiers. "You do not belong to us. You are banished the army."

"Banished!" exclaimed Del Vasto. "Who dares to pronounce my banishment?"

"We do," replied the men. "You would betray our interests. You would sell us to the Pope. Therefore we depose you. You are no longer our general. Go to your new master."

"Have a little patience, my good friends, and listen to reason," said Lannoy. "I speak for your own good. I would save you from a great crime."

"No more! We will hear no more!" cried the soldiers, furiously. "Begone! If you return again, we will massacre you."

"Your highness had better depart at once," said Bourbon. "If you inflame the men further, I may not be able to restrain them. You must go likewise, my lord," he added to Del Vasto. "It will not be safe for you to remain."

The counsel was followed. To prevent mishap, Bourbon conducted them to the outskirts of the camp.

VI.

VON FRUNDSBERG'S LAST CAROUSE.

FROM Viterbo, Bourbon pressed on towards Rome, hoping to take the city by surprise. By this time his army, increased, as we have said, by deserters from the troops of the League and the Pontifical forces, amounted to upwards of forty thousand men.

As the first glimpse of the fated city, destined so soon to fall into their hands, was caught from the hills near Bracciano, the excitement of the whole host, captains and generals included, was

prodigious. On that night Von Frundsberg had a grand carouse in his tent. Zucker and all the other German captains were with him, and they continued their revelry till past midnight, when Bourbon, accompanied by the Prince of Orange and Pomperant, entered the tent, hoping by his presence to put a stop to the orgie. Above the surrounding Bacchanals towered the gigantic figure of Von Frundsberg, his visage looking more inflamed than ever. As Bourbon and the others entered the tent, he was addressing his companions, telling them that in two days more Rome would be taken, and the sack begin.

"Then you will be amply rewarded," he said; "then you may strip all those temples of their ornaments and slay their priests. I give you each a cardinal, but I reserve to myself the Sovereign Pontiff. You know what I mean to do with him," added the sacrilegious wretch, producing his golden chain, and laughing loudly.

"Before you hang him, you must make him deliver up all his treasures—the tons of gold he has hidden in the Vatican and elsewhere," said Zucker.

"Fear not that," rejoined Von Frundsberg, with a tremendous roar of laughter. "I know well how to deal with him. But I must fulfil my mission. Have I not been told by Doctor Martin Luther himself that I am destined by Heaven to cast down Antichrist and to wash out the enormities of the polluted and idolatrous city of Rome in blood? For this purpose I have come hither."

At this moment his eye alighted upon Bourbon, and he called out,

"Welcome, noble general! thrice welcome! We are making merry, as you see, in anticipation of our victory. Our next carouse shall be in Rome, and it shall be a rare one—ho! ho!"

"You have sat late enough, and drank enough, baron," said Bourbon, glancing around at the in-

ebriated crew. "We shall march betimes to-morrow, and you will need clear heads."

"One more cup of wine, and we have done," said Von Frundsberg. "Nay, you must join us, general," he added to Bourbon, who shook his head. "We have got some famous Montepulciano, of the Pope's own vintage, and destined to the Pope's own cellar—ho! ho! Taste it, I pray your highness. You will find it delicious," smacking his lips. "Fill for me! fill!" he called to a soldier who served him, holding out an immense gilt chalice stolen from an altar at San Lorenzo-alle-Grotte—"fill to the brim! All must do me reason. It may be the last cup we shall drink together. Who knows?"

"You do not mean to empty that chalice, baron?" said Bourbon, looking in astonishment at the vessel, which held nearly a gallon of wine.

"By my faith! but I do, your highness," rejoined Von Frundsberg, with a tremendous roar

of laughter. "I drink to the speedy downfal of Rome."

And, as he spoke, he raised the brimming chalice to his lips, and did not remove it till it was completely drained.

After accomplishing this feat, he gazed at Bourbon, but his triumph was of short duration. With a convulsive attempt at utterance, which shook his whole frame, he fell heavily backwards.

Immediate assistance was rendered him, but it was of no avail. Suffocated by the draught he had swallowed, in a few seconds the infuriated drunkard had ceased to exist.

Bourbon shuddered as he gazed at the inanimate mass, and all the fierce soldiers around were impressed by the catastrophe. Von Frundsberg died with the chain of gold tightly clasped in his left hand.

Had Von Frundsberg's death occurred earlier, it might have produced some effect upon the lanz-

knechts. But he had brought them within sight of Rome, and though they grieved for him, they did not for a moment falter in their purpose, but accepted the Prince of Orange, whom Bourbon appointed as their general. Von Frundsberg found a rude grave at Bracciano, and the chain of gold was buried with him.

VII.

HOW BOURBON AND HIS BANDS ARRIVED BEFORE ROME.

NEXT morning, as soon as it was light, Bourbon, who had not taken off his armour, and had only snatched a couple of hours of sleep, rode to the summit of a hill, whence he could command a good view of the city he was about to deliver to destruction.

There lay the ancient capital of the world—and now the chief city of Christendom—the burial-place of the holy apostles and martyrs—there it lay, with its seven hills, its heathen temples and

Christian fanes, its ruins, its monuments, its palaces hallowed by a thousand historical recollections. There was the mighty Coliseum, there the Forum, there the Palatine, crowned with the palace of the Cæsars. There was Mount Aventine—there the Esquiline, with the Baths of Titus—there the Pincian Hill, with its cypresses. Over all, and dominating the ancient temples, rose the Basilica of Saint Peter—then, however, wanting its incomparable dome. Near to this stately fane were the Vatican and the frowning Castle of Saint Angelo, with the yellow Tiber flowing past its walls. Could he gaze on that time-hallowed city unmoved —knowing he was about to doom it to destruction? Some feelings of compunction did, indeed, cross him, but he quickly crushed them.

At a later hour in the same day—it was the 5th of May, 1527—the sentinels on the walls and gates of Rome, and on the battlements of the Castle of Saint Angelo, descried the mighty host advancing

along the wide and desolate Campagna. Presently came numerous messengers, wild with terror, describing the number and savage character of the troops. But the Pope did not appear to be alarmed by the tidings brought him. Though usually timid and irresolute, he did not exhibit any uneasiness now, but declared that ample preparations had been made for the defence of the city. He would not allow the bridges to be cut connecting the Borgo with the city, and prohibited the terrified merchants from removing their goods by the Tiber.

The reason of this apparent confidence was, that he fully believed he should be able to treat with Bourbon, and save the city from assault by payment of a large subsidy—never reflecting that it was not in Bourbon's power to treat with him, and that nothing less than the sack of the city would content the rapacious soldiery.

The defence of the city had been committed by the Pontiff to Renzo da Ceri, who persuaded him-

self that he could resist Bourbon as successfully at Rome as he had done at Marseilles. Besides the garrison of the Castle of Saint Angelo, and the Pope's Swiss guard, there were in Rome at the time about two thousand arquebussiers, and a small troop of cavalry. The walls and fortifications were for the most part in good order, and well supplied with ordnance, and as it was known that Bourbon was entirely without artillery, and almost without munitions, it was not deemed likely he could take the city by assault. Renzo's confidence was, therefore, excusable. But he was wrong. Bourbon had now an army with him whom no walls could keep out.

On arriving before Rome, Bourbon placed his army between the Janiculum Hill and the Vatican, and he had no sooner taken up this position than he sent Pomperant with a trumpet to summon the Pope to surrender the city.

Presenting himself at the ancient Porta Fla-

minia, which was succeeded, some half a century later, by the Porta del Popolo, Pomperant caused the trumpeter to sound his clarion thrice, and in the name of the Constable de Bourbon summoned the Sovereign Pontiff to surrender the city.

Response was immediately made in haughty terms by Renzo da Ceri, who ordered Pomperant to retire, or he would fire upon him, and the latter accordingly withdrew.

Bourbon expected no other answer, but on receiving it he gave immediate orders that the city should be assaulted on the following morning at daybreak.

At eventide, Bourbon, attended by the Prince of Orange and Pomperant, surveyed the city from the Monte Mario. After a careful examination of the walls, which then formed a circuit of more than five leagues, he decided on making the assault at different points of the Aurelian Wall between the Janiculum Hill and the Vatican. This being settled, he rode back towards the camp.

As yet not a single gun had been fired on either side, for the Pope had ordered his general not to precipitate matters by opening fire from the Castle of Saint Angelo upon the enemy. But the cannon were all shotted, and the sentinels with their arquebusses on the shoulder, were pacing to and fro on the ramparts.

When Bourbon returned to the camp, he called together the men, and thus addressed them:

"Captains and brave soldiers! fortune has at last brought us to the city we have so ardently desired to reach. Rome is before you. On the other side of those old walls countless treasures await you. But you must fight hard to win the treasures. The walls must be scaled, since we have no cannon to breach them."

"We will do it, noble general," cried the men. "We need no breach."

"I myself will lead the assault," continued Bourbon, "and will show you how to take the city."

"We will follow, fear not! Vive Bourbon!" shouted the soldiers.

"Listen to me, my friends," he pursued. "The famous astrologer, Cornelius Agrippa, of whom you must have heard, foretold that I should die before the walls of a great city. It may be here—before Rome—that I am destined to perish. If it be so, I care not. The death will be glorious—worthy of a soldier. I shall lead the assault without fear, certain that you, my brave companions, will capture the city, and avenge me."

"'Tis a false prediction!" cried a hundred voices. "We will all guard you. You will not die thus. You are destined to be King of Rome."

"Be my fate what it may," said Bourbon—"whether I share your triumph, or die beforehand, I know that Rome, with all its treasures, with its Pope, its cardinals, its nobles, and its fair women, will be yours. And now return to your tents, and

take your rest. You will have enough to do to-morrow. An hour before dawn, make ready for the assault. Your captains have their full directions. You may rest without fear. I will take care that strict watch is kept."

The soldiers then dispersed, singing, "Calla, calla! Viva la fama de Bourbon!"

"You have no faith in that idle prediction?" remarked the Prince of Orange to Bourbon, as he accompanied him to his tent.

"I have scarcely thought of it before to-day, but it came upon me forcibly as I gazed on Rome this evening from the Monte Mario," rejoined Bourbon. "If I should fall, you must take the command of the army."

"No such necessity, I trust, may arise," said Philibert. "But the army shall not want a leader."

"It will have a good one in you," rejoined Bourbon. "And now leave me. Come to me an hour before daybreak."

With this the Prince of Orange departed, and Bourbon was left alone, and passed several hours in deep self-communion.

About midnight he roused himself, and, issuing from his tent, looked around. It was a glorious night, and the old walls that rose before him were bathed in the moonbeams. The camp was hushed, and all was so still at the moment, that the tread of the sentinels could be heard on the ramparts. Having looked around for a short time, he re-entered his tent, trimmed his lamp, and sat down to look at a plan of Rome, which was laid on the table before him. From this occupation he was roused by the noise of some one entering the tent, and, looking up, he perceived Pomperant, accompanied by a nun.

Surprised at the sight, he inquired why he was thus disturbed.

"The holy sister herself will explain her errand," replied Pomperant. "She has ventured forth from

the city to see your highness, and I could not refuse to bring her to you."

"You have done wrong," said Bourbon, sternly. "I have no time to waste on women now. Depart, good sister."

"Dismiss me not, I pray your highness, till you have heard what I have to say," rejoined the nun. "Am I so much changed? Does this garb disguise me so greatly, that you fail to recognise Marcelline d'Herment?"

"Marcelline d'Herment!" exclaimed Bourbon, in surprise.

"I am vowed to Heaven, as you see," she rejoined. "I have entered a convent in Rome, and hoped to pass the rest of my days in peace. But I have been sorely troubled since I learnt that your highness was marching to lay waste the city, and determined, at whatever risk, to make an effort to save it. With that view I came forth to-night. I ventured to approach the sentinels, and I desired

to be brought before your highness. The men refused, but while they were talking with me the Seigneur Pomperant came up, and at once consented to bring me before you."

"If I have done wrong, I trust your highness will forgive me," said Pomperant, "but I could not refuse the request."

"Nay, there is no harm done," said Bourbon. "But how comes it that you have abandoned the world?" he added to Marcelline. "I thought you had given your heart to Pomperant. Why have you placed this insurmountable bar between yourself and him?"

"Ah! why, indeed?" cried Pomperant, reproachfully.

"I could not do otherwise," she rejoined. "But I have not come hither to tell my own sad story. I have come to entreat your highness, even at the eleventh hour, to abandon your impious purpose. Oh! prince, listen to me, I implore you. Treason

and rebellion are great crimes, but they are as naught compared with the act you are about to commit. If you deliver over Rome to pillage and slaughter, your name will be for ever execrated. Turn back, I implore of you!"

"I cannot turn back. Be that my answer," said Bourbon, impatiently.

"But it is in your power to save the city!" cried Marcelline. "You can come to terms with his Holiness, who will enable you to satisfy your men."

"Bah!" exclaimed Bourbon. "Nothing will satisfy them but the plunder of the city."

"Will no consideration move you?" she cried. "Have you no pity for the innocent and the aged? Will you allow the temples of your religion to be destroyed and polluted?"

"My heart is steeled to pity," rejoined Bourbon, sternly. "All your solicitations are in vain."

"Then since you are deaf to all entreaties,

tremble!" she cried. "Tremble! for Heaven's vengeance will alight upon you. Grace has been offered you, but you have cast it aside. But you will not enjoy your triumph. You will not enter the city."

"Who shall prevent me?" demanded Bourbon.

"Heaven," she rejoined. "Heaven will prevent you."

"Were you a messenger from Heaven itself, you should not prevent me from being first to scale the walls," said Bourbon. "This interview can lead to nothing, and must not be prolonged," he added to Pomperant. "Conduct the Sister Marcelline through the camp, and place her where she may safely enter the city."

"It shall be done," replied Pomperant.

He then withdrew with Marcelline. On reaching the outskirts of the camp, she said to him,

"Are you determined to follow Bourbon?"

"To the last," he rejoined. "If he is shot down, I will take his place."

Marcelline made no reply, but darted from him, and ran towards the Aurelian Wall.

Plunging into the dry fosse which skirted the wall, she hurried along the bottom of the trench for some distance in the direction of the Vatican. All at once she stopped, and clapped her hands. At the signal, a ladder was let down, and, mounting it, she gained the ramparts.

Marcelline fancied her movements were unobserved, but she was mistaken. Curious to ascertain how she could gain access to the city, Pomperant had followed her. On approaching the spot where she had disappeared, he perceived that the old wall, which was built of brick, and of great solidity, was in this part considerably dilapidated—so much so, as almost to form a breach.

After carefully examining the spot, he hastened back to Bourbon's tent to acquaint him with the important discovery he had made. Bourbon had thrown himself on a couch, but without divesting

himself of his armour, and he was wrapped in the last slumber he was destined to enjoy, when Pomperant entered his tent, and aroused him.

"I am sure your highness will forgive me for disturbing you," he said, "when I tell you that I have discovered a breach in the walls."

"Ha! that is indeed good news!" cried Bourbon. "But how did you make the discovery?"

"I made it while following Marcelline to see how she entered the city," replied Pomperant.

"Take me to the spot," said Bourbon. "I must be satisfied with my own eyes that you have not been deceived. It is strange that you roused me from a dream of the assault. I thought an angel with a flaming brand stood on the battlements to drive me back, but I went on. Listen to me, Pomperant. When dealing with the miserable Milanese, as you know, I took Heaven to witness that I meant them fairly, wishing I might perish by the first shot at the first battle if I played them

false. This is the first battle, and not a shot has yet been fired."

"The first shot will not harm you, my lord," rejoined Pomperant. "You did not wilfully deceive the Milanese. The Spanish soldiers refused to obey your orders."

"True," replied Bourbon; "but I feel that I violated my promise, and if Heaven punishes me, I cannot complain. But come. Let us examine the wall."

They then quitted the tent, and, enveloped in long russet-coloured cloaks, which completely covered their armour, passed out of the camp, and cautiously approached the Aurelian Wall.

VIII.

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

No sooner had Marcelline gained the ramparts, than the ladder she had ascended was drawn up by the sentinels. Before she could move off, a martial personage, accoutred in a steel cap and corslet, and armed with an arquebuss, came up and detained her.

"Ha! where have you been, sister?" he demanded, sternly. "Speak!—give an account of yourself."

"I have been in the enemy's camp," she re-

plied, "and have spoken with the general himself."

"With Bourbon!" exclaimed the soldier. "You are trifling with me."

"On my life I am not," she rejoined. "I have seen him as I see you, but I have failed in my object, which was to dissuade him from the attack."

"I am not surprised at it," said the soldier, contemptuously. "You have gone on a mad errand. Did you for a moment suppose that Bourbon would turn back at your entreaties?"

"Bourbon has a noble heart, and I thought to move him," she rejoined.

"Tut! Rome is not likely to be saved from sack by a woman's prayers and entreaties," said the soldier. "We must keep Bourbon and his bands out of the city, if we can. If they once get in, woe betide us! But how is this?" he cried, noticing the dilapidated state of the ramparts. "This wall ought to have been repaired."

"It will be repaired in the morning, good Messer Benvenuto Cellini," replied the sentinel.

"To-morrow may be too late," remarked Cellini. "I will see our general about it without delay."

"You need not go far to seek him, brave Benvenuto," said Renzo da Ceri, marching towards them. "What have you to say to me?"

"I would pray your lordship to look at the condition of these ramparts," said Cellini. "There is a breach as if made by cannon."

"By Heaven! the wall is very ruinous here!" cried Renzo. "I cannot think how the gap escaped my notice."

"Since it has escaped your lordship's quick eyes, it may escape those of the enemy," said Cellini. "But it may be well to have it speedily repaired."

"It shall be repaired to-morrow morning," said Renzo.

"Provided Bourbon does not enter by it in the mean time," said Cellini.

"Oh! he will not attempt the assault for a month," rejoined Renzo, contemptuously. "He has no artillery. To-morrow, or next day at the latest, we shall have Count Guido Rangone, with five thousand fantassins and a corps of artillery. He is now at Ponte Salario. We shall also be speedily reinforced by detachments from the armies of the Duke of Urbino and the Marquis of Saluzzo. Rome, therefore, is secure."

"Your lordship must pardon me, but I cannot think Rome secure while Bourbon is encamped before it," remarked Cellini.

"Well, you have abandoned your trade of goldsmith, and have taken up arms for its defence," said Renzo, laughing. "If you win as much renown as a soldier as you have done as a sculptor, Rome may be proud of you."

"I will try," said Cellini.

"Is this the famous Benvenuto Cellini?" inquired Marcelline, approaching them. "I knew him not."

"Yes, this is he, who may vie with the greatest of the ancient sculptors," said Renzo da Ceri.

"For the moment, I am a mere Roman soldier," said Cellini. "I shall resume my profession as an artist when we have got rid of Bourbon. But who is she who inquires my name?"

"One you may be proud to know," said Renzo. "This holy sister is Marcelline d'Herment, one of the Amazons who helped to defend Marseilles."

"I have heard of her," said Cellini. "I hope our Roman dames will follow her example. But hush!" he exclaimed, stepping towards the battlements, "I see two tall figures approaching the walls. They come nearer. Do you not distinguish them?"

"Perfectly," replied Marcelline.

"Be silent, and we can hear what they say," whispered Cellini. And after listening intently for a few moments, he added, "They have discovered the breach. It is here the assault will be made tomorrow morning."

"How know you that?" demanded Renzo da Ceri. "I could hear nothing."

"My ears never deceive me," said Cellini. "Who are they, think you?"

"The tallest of the two is Bourbon," replied Marcelline, in a whisper. "I recognise his voice and figure."

"Bourbon!" exclaimed Cellini. "Then his hour is come."

And kneeling down, he placed his arquebuss on the battlements and took deliberate aim at the duke. But just as he was about to fire, Marcelline caught hold of his hand and stopped him, and ere he could take fresh aim the two personages were gone.

"Maledizione! why did you interfere, sister?" cried Benvenuto, turning angrily upon her. "I should have killed him, and delivered Rome. I never miss my aim."

"I would not have him die now," she rejoined.

"Well, he shall not escape me," said Cellini. "I heard him say he would be first to scale the walls."

"And if he said so he will keep his word," rejoined Marcelline.

"I will be ready for him. What says your excellency now?" he added to Renzo.

"I have little doubt that the assault will be made to-morrow morning, and at this point," replied Renzo. "Since the breach cannot be repaired, I will send a sufficient force to defend it."

"Be mine the privilege to fire the first shot," said Benvenuto.

"Agreed," replied Renzo. "Not an arquebuss shall be discharged till you have fired."

IX.

THE FIRST SHOT FROM THE WALLS.

DAWN was at hand—the dawn of the direst day that ever Rome beheld.

Already the entire host of Bourbon was under arms, and impatient for the assault. The captains were forming their men in masses before the long dark line of walls which they were about to scale.

Grim and menacing did those walls and bastions look now, as they were thronged with armed men, and bristled with cannon. But they inspired no terror on the bands gathered before them.

Sullen and stern in the grey light of morning loomed the Castle of Saint Angelo, but the fierce host had no dread of its guns.

As the shades of night disappeared, and day-light revealed to them the fierce bands gathered before the Aurelian Wall, and forming a long line, extending from the Janiculum Hill to the rear of the Basilica of Saint Peter's and the Vatican, those stationed on the ramparts and bastions, though valiant men, were seized with dread, the aspect of the host being truly formidable.

Scarcely had it become light when word was passed along the whole line that the assault was about to be made, and the manifestations of impatience, heretofore exhibited, were increased in a tenfold degree, the men becoming so fiercely excited that they could be scarcely restrained by their captains.

While they were all eagerly awaiting the signal, a movement was made in the centre of the line,

and Bourbon appeared, fully accoutred, and wearing his emblazoned surcoat over his armour. He was attended by his standard-bearer, carrying his banner, which was of yellow taffety, embroidered with flaming swords, and bearing the motto, "Espérance, Espérance."

Close behind came Pomperant, while in front ran several Spanish soldiers with a long scaling-ladder, which they reared against the wall at the appointed spot.

All this was accomplished with the utmost rapidity. A charge was then sounded loudly by the trumpeters, and Bourbon, sword in hand, mounted the ladder, shouting in a loud voice, "Follow me, my brave fellows! On! on!"

But he had not ascended many steps when the barrel of an arquebuss was protruded over the ramparts, and the next moment the discharge was heard.

The shot struck the duke below the gorget

and traversed his right side. Feeling himself mortally wounded, he made an effort to descend, but, unable to retain his hold of the ladder, he fell to the ground.

As he dropped, Benvenuto Cellini, with his face lighted up by a fierce exulting smile, was seen looking down from above.

"Saints be praised! the first shot has told," cried the sculptor. "I have killed him."

As the words were uttered, a hundred bullets from the infuriated soldiers whistled about his ears, but not one hit its mark.

Pomperant, who was close behind, and had just set foot on the ladder when Bourbon fell, now rushed to his wounded leader's assistance.

"Are you much hurt, my lord?" he inquired, anxiously.

"Mortally," gasped Bourbon. "I have not many minutes of life left. But do not tarry with me, Pomperant. Supply my place. On! on!"

"I cannot leave you thus, my dear lord," said Pomperant. "Perhaps you are not dangerously hurt."

"I tell you I am sped," groaned Bourbon. "My eyes are growing dim. What are the men doing? Are they mounting the ladder?"

"A hundred ladders are placed against the walls, and the men are swarming up them," rejoined Pomperant.

"I cannot see them, but I hear their shouts, mingled with the rattle of arquebusses and the roar of cannon," cried Bourbon. "Have any gained the ramparts?"

"None as yet, my lord," rejoined Pomperant. "The foremost have all been struck down, but others are pressing on."

"Where is the Prince of Orange?" asked Bourbon, anxiously.

"The smoke is so thick that I cannot discern him," replied Pomperant. "The besieged make

a desperate resistance. Our men are hurled from the battlements by scores."

"But they do not give way? Others mount —ha?"

"They do, my lord. Ha! the smoke clears off. I see the Prince of Orange now. He is upon the ramparts."

"Bravely done, by Sainte Barbe! Would I were with him!" ejaculated Bourbon. "Do the men know I have fallen?"

"Some few may know the sad truth, my lord," replied Pomperant. "But the mass believe you are on the ramparts. They are shouting your name. Hark!"

As he spoke, loud shouts of "Bourbon!—Bourbon!" could be distinctly heard above the terrible din of the conflict.

"The walls are gained, my lord," said Pomperant, after a brief pause. "Your standard is placed on the battlements. Listen to those shouts of victory, with which your own name is mingled.

"I hear them," cried Bourbon. "On! on! brave Philibert. On! on! to Saint Peter's—to the Vatican! I am with you!" he ejaculated, making a vain effort to rise.

"My lord—my dear lord! turn your thoughts towards Heaven!" cried Pomperant.

"I cannot pray amid this din of battle," said Bourbon. "Oh! that I could have crossed those walls! Oh! that I could have reached Saint Peter's! But it was decreed that I should never enter Rome. Agrippa's prediction has come to pass, and the malediction I invoked has fallen upon me. I am justly punished for my sins."

"Then implore Heaven's forgiveness while there is yet time, my dear lord," cried Pomperant.

"Have mercy on me, Jesu! have mercy!" ejaculated Bourbon, fervently. "I have no hope save in thee."

So marked a change then took place in his noble features, that Pomperant thought all was

over. A slight pressure of the hand, however, showed him that the duke was still conscious.

All at once, Bourbon roused himself by a supreme effort, and said,

"Farewell, my friend! To the battle!—away! Cover me—leave me!"

With these words, he expired.

Pomperant gazed for a moment with blinded eyes at the inanimate form of the hero he had loved so well, and served so long and faithfully, and exclaimed, in mournful accents,

"Farewell, valiant Bourbon! Farewell, noble prince and gallant knight! Thou hast not left thy peer behind thee! Farewell for ever!"

He then cast a cloak over the body, and, snatching up the duke's sword, which had fallen near him, pushed aside the throng of soldiers who were struggling to mount the ladder, and shouting, "Bourbon!—Bourbon!" gained the ramparts without difficulty.

X.

IN SAINT PETER'S.

THE broad parapet was ankle-deep in blood, and was covered with dying and dead—Romans, Spaniards, Germans. But the defenders of the breach were all gone. Bourbon's broad banner was floating above the battlements, but his standard-bearer was lying stark beside it.

Taking down the banner, and giving it to one of the Spanish soldiers who had followed him, Pomperant, amid a shower of bullets directed against him from the Pontifical soldiers, who were

still masters of a neighbouring bastion, hurried along the ramparts in search of some means of descending to the city.

Strange was it he should escape uninjured, for several of the soldiers with him were struck down; but, after stumbling over heaps of dead bodies, and plashing through pools of blood, he reached a tower, where a few gallant men were gathered to dispute his progress. But these brave fellows could not withstand the furious attack made upon them, and Pomperant and his men, having forcibly entered the tower, dashed down a winding staircase, and issued forth into a street in the Borgo.—

Here a terrible conflict still was going on, but though the Romans still disputed the advance of the assailants, they were evidently giving way before them. The ear was deafened with the clash of arms, the shouts of the combatants, the groans of the wounded, the bray of trumpets, the roar of ordnance, and the sharp rattle of musketry. The

terrified inhabitants were running in all directions, uttering piercing cries.

Pomperant's object was to reach Saint Peter's, and, after engaging in several conflicts, he made his way in the direction of the Basilica. As he went on, many a frightful scene of massacre met his gaze, which he would have prevented if he had had the power.

The Spanish soldiers, having now learnt that Bourbon had fallen, gave no quarter, but slew all they encountered without pity—priests, old men, women, and children—shouting, "Carne! carne! —sangre! sierra! Bourbon! Bourbon!"

Fearfully was Bourbon avenged, and if his spirit hovered over Rome at that dread hour, it must have bewailed these frightful excesses.

The noble colonnades, which now form so grand an approach to Saint Peter's, were then unbuilt, but there was a large piazza in front of the sacred edifice, and here the last stand was made by the

Pontifical troops. But they were charged by the Prince of Orange, and being dispersed and unable to rally, were all cut down.

As Pomperant entered the piazza the Papal troops were flying in all directions, but none of them were allowed to escape. Leaving the Prince of Orange to pursue his victory, Pomperant hurried towards the glorious Basilica, and mounted its wide steps, which were covered with dead and defiled with gore.

While the conflict was going on in the piazza, the Pope had been hearing high mass at the altar, but warned by the shouts of the fugitives, who rushed into the sacred edifice in the vain hope of finding it a sanctuary, he escaped, with several of the cardinals who were with him at the time, by a secret passage to the Vatican, and thence by a covered way to the Castle of Saint Angelo, where, for the time at least, he was secure. He was just hurrying from the altar as Pomperant entered the

church, and had he not been protected by his Swiss guard, he must have been captured.

Frightful was the scene that ensued. The brave Swiss were quickly overcome and massacred by the bands of unlicensed soldiers who had burst into the church, and numbers of prelates and priests shared their fate. The work of pillage then commenced, and the altars were quickly stripped of all their ornaments by the rapacious soldiery.

Great silver crucifixes, the Pope's splendid cross, magnificent censors, golden and silver images, superb altar coverings, and rich priestly vestments, great chalices, cups and plate, were all piled together in an immense heap, to be divided anon among the soldiery.

But while the work of pillage was going on, numbers of the Lutheran soldiers were engaged in demolishing all they regarded as idolatrous and superstitious, and no statue or picture escaped destruction or mutilation by these ferocious zealots.

The whole interior of the glorious building presented an indescribable scene of horror and confusion. Instead of resounding with the solemn notes of the organ, and the exquisite voices of the choir, the roof now echoed with the shouts and imprecations of the infuriated soldiery, and with the shrieks of their victims. The pavement was slippery with blood. Hell and its legions seemed let loose in the holy of holies.

Horror-stricken by the scene, Pomperant was hurrying away, when his ear was assailed by the cries of a female in distress. So piercing were these cries that they were distinctly heard above the dreadful hubbub that prevailed. But heart-rending as they were, they seemed to excite no attention. All were too busily occupied to heed them.

Looking in the direction whence these cries proceeded, Pomperant perceived a nun struggling with three or four Spanish soldiers, one of whom

had seized her in his arms and was carrying her off, despite her cries and resistance. What was Pomperant's horror and distress on discovering that this unfortunate nun was Marcelline. He instantly flew to her assistance, and fiercely commanded the soldier to release her, but as the ruffian refused to relinquish his prize, he unhesitatingly cut him down, and bore her off, hoping to find some safe asylum for her. But there was no place of refuge to be found in Saint Peter's on that terrible day. While he was gazing around in fearful anxiety, trying to soothe her, the Spanish soldier, whom he had wounded, approached them unawares, and plunged his poniard in her breast, exclaiming as he struck the vengeful blow,

"If she cannot be mine, she shall not be yours."

Having consummated this atrocious act, the wretch fell on the pavement.

Half maddened, and scarcely knowing what he did, covered with the blood of her for whom he

would have shed his own heart's blood, Pomperant hurried with her to a side-chapel, which, having been pillaged and stripped, was now deserted. He saw that the wound she had received was mortal, and that she had not many minutes to live, and sitting down on a marble bench, held her in his arms.

"Marcelline!" he exclaimed, in tones of deepest anguish. "Speak to me—one word!"

She opened her eyes, and gazed tenderly at him.

"Farewell, dear Pomperant," she said. "At this moment I may confess that I have ever loved you; but as we must have been separated on earth, my death need not afflict you."

"Our parting will be brief," said Pomperant. "I shall soon join you in heaven. I shall know no more earthly happiness."

"If we are to meet again in regions of bliss, Pomperant," she said, "you must win Heaven's forgiveness for your share in this dreadful day by

years of penitence. Think of my words, Pomperant—neglect them not!"

As he pressed her distractedly to his breast, a tremor passed through her frame, and she was gone.

So acute was his anguish, that he could scarcely refrain from plunging his sword into his own breast, and dying beside her.

We must drop a veil over the horrors of the sack of Rome, which endured without interruption for two months. Never in the history of the world was a city abandoned to such frightful licence—never were such atrocities committed.

Bourbon found a place of sepulture in the chapel of the Castle of Gaeta, where a magnificent monument was reared over him by his soldiers.

THE END.

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